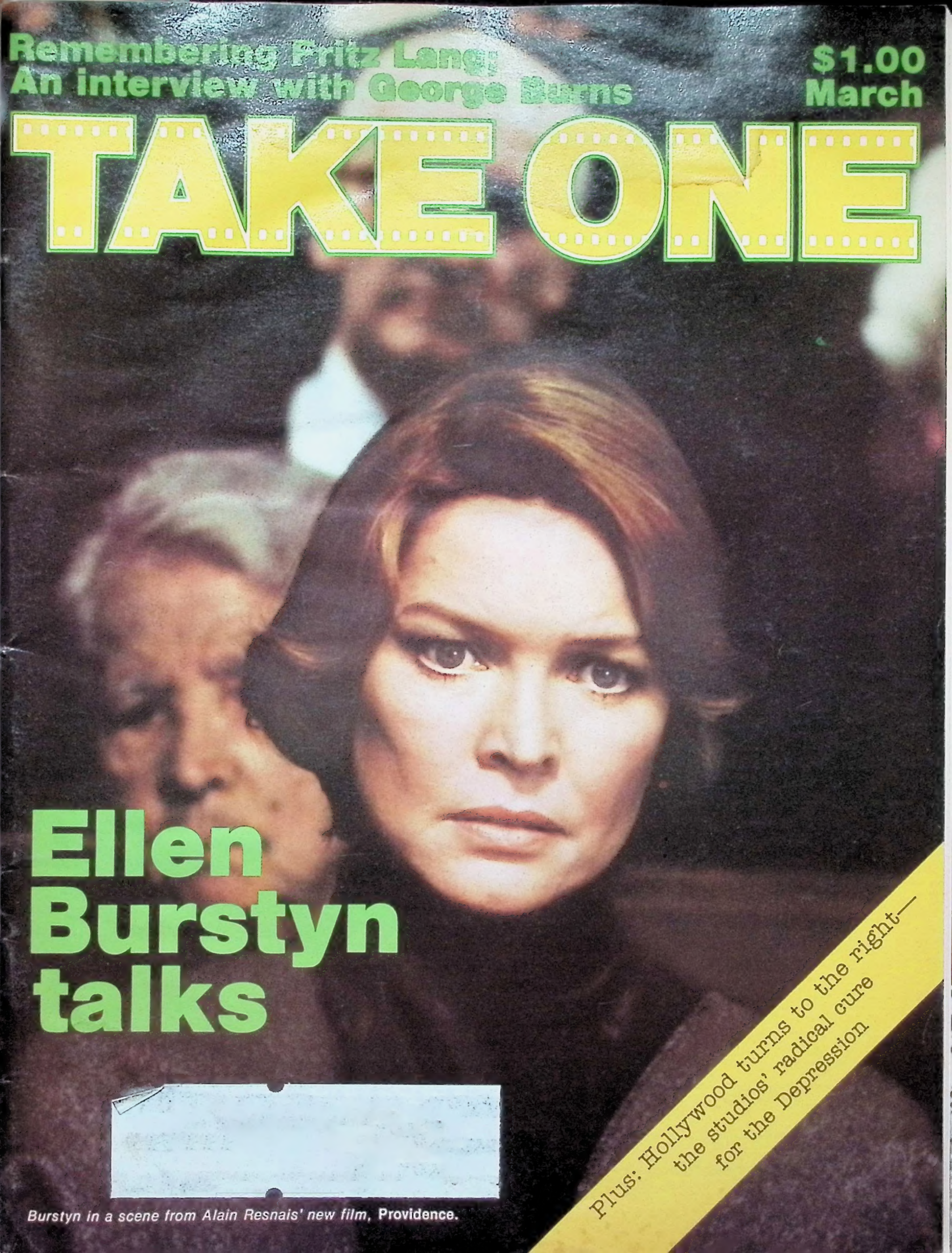
Remembering Fritz Lang
An interview with George Burns

$1.00
March

TAKE ONE



Ellen Burstyn talks

Plus: Hollywood turns to the right—
the studios' radical cure
for the Depression

Burstyn in a scene from Alain Resnais' new film, **Providence.**

YOU'VE SEEN HARRY REEMS IN "DEEP THROAT"

CAN YOU PICTURE HIM IN JAIL?

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VOLUME 5 NUMBER 8
MARCH 1977

TAKE ONE

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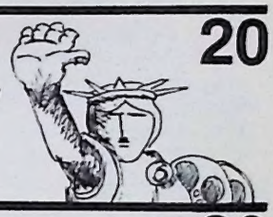

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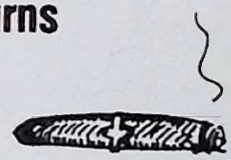

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UPFRONT

News

Shaw Brothers, number-one Hong Kong producer, has cancelled production of a film dealing with the Dutch drug connection because of a blackmail attempt on director Li Han-Hsiang. Location scenes for this film, entitled *Gambling for Heads*, were being shot in Amsterdam early in November when the director was approached in his hotel room by a group of Chinese.

Brandishing a gun, one of them demanded 100,000 guilders from the director because, he said, the film portrayed himself and his gang.

The director immediately rang his backers in Hong Kong for advice, and was ordered to return home at once to forestall any further extortion attempts.

—*Arthur Hullet*

Cousin, Cousine, which is breaking records everywhere and is now the official French nominee for the Academy Awards, was sold to its North American distributor for something less than $50,000 because its producers were sure that it had no chance of making any money on this continent. A French official now estimates that the picture could gross $7,000,000 in the U.S. and Canada before it's through.

Robert Munger, the man who came up with the "concept" that was developed into the highly-successful *The Omen,* has surveyed the young people who bought tickets to that film and discovered that "The more often a young adult attends church, the more frequent a moviegoer he or she is. Basically, the same kind of people who are 'stay-at-homes' from one interest are 'stay-at-homes' in general." He concludes that "there is a vast untapped audience of Christian believers" out there somewhere.

... John Milius has written a script (and is planning to direct it himself) for a feature on surfing. ... Paul Schrader — screenwriter of **Taxi Driver** and the forthcoming **Rolling Thunder** — has a set of those vanity license plates so popular among the Hollywood smart set. His read "OZU". ... When Cecil B. de Mille retired, he had a small gift for the lady who had planned his meals at the Paramount commissary for 30 years: a percentage of **The Ten Commandments.** The residuals are still coming in today. ... John Cassavetes is currently hard at work. He is directing and acting in **Opening Night,** a film he also wrote. Ben Gazzara, Joan Blondell and Fred Draper also star in this "occult" drama. ... "Esquire" magazine has announced plans to produce full-length 35mm feature films. ... Steve Spielberg's first feature film, **Firelight,** which he made at 18, cost a total of $500. His **Close Encounters of the Third Kind** is costing $14 million. Talk about inflation! ... Watch for **The Star Wars** to open (in 70mm!) around the end of May — and watch for incredible-looking photos from the film to start appearing in magazines and newspapers within the next month or so: the sets and costumes make **2001** look downright unimaginative. ... Claude Lelouch's **Another Man, Another Woman** started shooting the last week of December with the French director painting the mid-Western street at The Burbank Studios red and white (it's the set that was used in **The Music Man** — gazebo and all). ... After years as an exile in Europe, Brazilian director Glauber Rocha has returned to his native land to prepare for a feature film. ... Michelangelo Antonioni is rumoured to be preparing a film to be shot this year in Russia. ... Will Ali McGraw return to films in a feature to be produced by Ray Stark and directed by Martin Ritt, co-starring with husband Steve McQueen? Only The Shadow knows. ... We hear that Milos Forman tried to obtain American citizenship via a special act of Congress — and missed out by just one vote.

A couple of follow-up items on people and films mentioned in past issues of "Take One":

Nicholas Ray (see our incredibly comprehensive interview in the last issue) still plans to shoot **City Blues** as his next feature, but it'll have to be without Norman Mailer, who has left the cast. And Ray also reports that the budget for the picture has shot up from its original $500,000 to three times that amount.

James Ivory [see our interview in Vol. 4 No. 9] is obtaining some satisfaction in his battle with AIP to have his version of **The Wild Party** released commercially in North America. The film was shown in the U.S. in a version that Ivory describes as "butchered," but was pretty unanimously condemned by the critics and never even opened in New York. Now, the "Ivory version" — 100 minutes long — is showing in Paris to very good reviews and nice box office, and NBC has bought the director's original print for televising sometime this year.

The American Lung Association has announced that the General Cinema Corp. has put anti-smoking regulations into effect in its 650 theatres in 39 states. As a result of protests from non-smokers, the noxious weed will henceforth be allowed only in the lobbies and lounges of the chain's cinemas.

Meanwhile, in Seattle, firemen have been carrying out their own crusade. Sixty-two citations were issued last year to those caught smoking in that city's theatres (where it has been illegal for some time). Fines levied by the courts have amounted to as much as $100 in some cases.

Watch for a rash of Sylvester Stallone-related re-releases, now that his **Rocky** is making it big. Columbia is planning an April reissue of **The Lords of Flatbush** (in which Stallone plays alongside fellow-unknowns Henry Winkler and Susan Blakely); New World will bring back **Death Race 2000** (David Carradine in the lead); and we'll even get a chance to see **No Place to Hide,** which has been pretty-effectively hidden up to now. ... The Swedish government has officially cleared Ingmar Bergman of charges that he evaded income taxes. Not only was the director sent a $1881 refund and an apology, but the public attorney who initiated the proceedings is said to be in for a disciplining. ... Mid December saw the start of work on **Winter Kills.** Based on the Richard Condon novel, the film stars Jeff Bridges, John Huston, Anthony Perkins, Eli Wallach, Sterling Hayden, Toshiro Mifune and Dorothy Malone. ... Michael Crichton will write and direct **Coma,** a hospital / terror story. ... Walt Disney has started work on a full-length, animated feature, called **The Black Cauldron,** that is expected to take years to complete. ... Is the National Film Board of Canada's long-standing commitment to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation on the wane? The governmental film agency seems to be seriously considering the possibility of co-producing some made-for-tv features with the independent Canadian Television Network. ... Sometime Take One contributor (and Producer of **Monty Python and the Holy Grail**) Mark Forstater is planning a science-fiction feature to be called **Battle Truck.** ... Samuel Fuller plays the role of a sinister film-industry executive in Wim Wenders' **Rule Without Exception.** ... Luis Bunuel started (Jan. 15) **This Obscure Object of Desire** (the same 19th-century story also served as the basis for Von Sternberg's **The Devil is a Woman**). ... Candice Bergen and Giancarlo Giannini are hard at work —at Rome's Cinecitta Studios — in Lina Wertmuller's romantic comedy **A Night Full of Rain** —the director's first film in English (the pair play American and Italian journalists, respectively). ... Dirk Bogarde has been cast in Rainer Werner Fassbinder's first English-language film, **Despair.** Filming is to start in April.

Title of the Month: Robert (**Sounder**) Radnitz's just-completed-shooting **A Hero Ain't Nothing but a Sandwich.**

Here's a story with a happy ending:

For the past five years or more, the Seattle Film Society has been publishing a lively little film magazine called "Movietone News." With a total circulation of about 1300 copies, the publication is put together largely with volunteer help and—nonetheless—loses a bit of money. It is a conspicuously non-commercial operation.

When, a few months back, a columnist in "Modern Photography" saluted "Movietone News," the people who put the magazine together had every hope that it would bring them to the attention of a few new readers—but they could hardly have expected to receive a terse communiqué from the Vice President and General Manager of Fox Movietonews (a branch of Twentieth Century-Fox) protesting their use of a corporate name, demanding that they cease using it, and announcing an intention to hold the magazine "accountable in damages."

Well... Richard Jameson—editor of "Movietone News"—must have spent some anxious moments. He fired off a 7-page (single-spaced) letter, in which he tried to explain the non-commercial nature of his operation, and that—far from any notion of ripping off Movietonews—the name of the magazine had been adopted as a form of homage to an aspect of American film that everyone had felt certain was long dead and gone. Copies of Jameson's letter went to such film heavies as Robert Altman, Peter Bogdanovich, Vincent Canby, Frank Capra, Pauline Kael, and Herman G. Weinberg.

It turns out that Jack Muth, VP of Movietonews, is an all right kind of guy after all. No sooner did he receive Jameson's letter (and copies of "Movietone News") than he called Jameson right up and made noises that the magazine's editor describes as "conciliatory—indeed, downright friendly." It looks, now, as if "Movietone News" will be able to continue publishing—probably under its present name—and no one is going to get sued.

And, if you want to see what all the excitement was about, the address of "Movietone News" is: 5236 18th Avenue N.E., Seattle, WA 98105. Subsriptions are $7 for 10 issues.

Letters

Bang on

I have finally had the chance to read the special Alfred Hitchcock issue of *Take One*. If I may, a few comments on a question.

1. It was an excellent number of the magazine... and best wishes on the anniversary.

2. I particularly appreciated the examining the *North by Northwest* sequence, and I look forward to others based on this model.

3. One element that Tarantino did not mention — it is unfortunate that the continuity and timing of the sequence is frequently disrupted, because there is a reel changeover at the point where Valerian is arriving at the curb. The changeover is not only in the 35mm prints, but also in the 16mm prints from Films Incorporated.

4. The whole subject of changeovers might be a good one for an article sometime. We recall showings of *The Ruling Class* at a now defunct Rochester theatre where they shaved a minute or so at every changeover in order to help end the last show and lock up the house before midnight.

5. I would be willing to bet my fortune that Jay Cocks (and why does he refuse to be photographed) is wrong about *Hamlet* as the source for the title of *North by Northwest*.

Martin Fass
Rochester, N.Y.

On Bangs

Dear Lester,
With Rock 'n' Roll gone beyond death into a state of irrelevant decomposition, its inert hulk infested with maggots, worms, Eagles, The Captain & Tennille, it seems only logical that smart guys like yourself are off to greener pastures. Where's the action now? What form of culture will feel the bite of the suctorial mouth on its exposed underbelly? Where will the critical lampreys strike next? Poor J. Denver was so struck by your vicious, yet staggeringly subtle accounts that, when he finally got it, his only way to one up you was to run off to Reno with Frank. Now you are into Chic, just to prove that Denver isn't the only one capable of underwhelming associations. None of this really matters though.

I was nearly in tears to learn that you actually watched The Bugs Bunny-Road Runner Hour. Nobody who wears platform shoes and mirror shades ever watches cartoons. Although, Rod Scribner, one of the finest animators ever, was taken away to the rubber room on account of having sexual delusions. This may be the connection to your interests. Or is it just being hard up for bread?

Forget it Lester. Animation is a dying art. The best of it these days is on the same level as Arthur Lyman in comparison to Gary Burton, or more accurately, Harry Chapin to Reverend Gary Davis.

Clampett was one of the best, in his time, (we all get old and stupid, take Neil Young for instance) of the early cartoon directors. If you liked Bugs and Bogey in the *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* takeoff, you'd love Clampett's *Bacall to Arms*, where a wolf goes nuts over an animated version of *To Have or Have Not*. This is all to say that not everyone is uninterested in these home movies of the boys in their heyday. In a way it's like seeing The Stones on one of those old TAMI shows.

Maybe the B. Bunny Superstar show was put together poorly, but these days it's all we've got. The only hope is the Italian feature *Allegro non Troppo*. You should see this one if you can. Modern cartoon feature done up real good. Quality animation, none of that stiff blinking and bongo drum running sound effects. Ask *Take One* to let you review this one if you want to get in on the ground floor of the dying art of animation. Shit everything is getting all garbled up here.

You shouldn't call Freleng "...senile or a serious fool...," for saying that Bugs was as great a star as Gable, Cagney or Bogart. Heck, think for a minute about the impact of Bugs or Daffy or Pluto on the minds of adults, children, human beings everywhere and yourself. Those characters were alive to us up on the screen, and in reality they didn't even exist. With enough cunning, any fan could have snuck up on Bogart any day of the week and watched him punch out one of his wives. But these cartoon characters like Bugs, you could go right into the studio where he was being filmed and be taken right up to the very camera where the action was taking place and you still wouldn't be able to see Bugs, at least not moving.

Happy to see that you reviewed the picture. Sorry you didn't like it. Glad you like cartoons. Hope you see *Allegro non Troppo*.

Was surprised to read that you are from El Cajon. Thought you were born in Hamtramck. I was born in Oakland, Calif., but raised in Barstow.

Hope you find a niche without blanding out too badly. Next time I see your stuff will probably be in *The Financial Post*, or maybe you'll take that job in the P.R. department at Dow.

Agree on *Hunchback....*, but feel that it, *Astro-Zombies*, or *Plan 9 from Outer Space* (with home movie sequence of Bela Lugosi) to be superior to *Kitten with a Whip. Invasion U.S.A., RCMP and the Treasure of Ghengis Kahn* or, *Funny Girl* top *Kitten ...*

Keep 'em gagging!!!

Marv Newland
International Rocketship Ltd.
Animated Films
Vancouver, B.C.

Brando's bullshit

It is a well known fact among all but film critics that film critics rarely, if ever, know anything about acting. Even when they like a performance, they are almost never able to give the reasons why it is effective. There is an underlying assumption that the actor is merely the tool of the director, so the critic quickly attends to the technical end of the film, giving short shrift to the actor, without whom *there would be no film*. Next to the scriptwriter, the actor is the most important element in a film. This is so self-evident that there would be no need to elaborate except that almost all critics are unaware of the fact.

This is an introduction to George Morris' enamoured review of Marlon Brando's work in *The Missouri Breaks*, which must certainly be one of the worst westerns ever made. Morris notes the last fact: the loose plot structure, the deadly pace, the unmotivated actions of the characters (without noting the embarrassing modern jargon and performance by the feminine lead). He fails to note that Brando's performance is very poor because he doesn't know what acting is. As an actor, I know that the scene of Brando with his horse, however well directed, means nothing if it is unconnected to a coherent characterization. Notice that I use the word characterization because that is what acting is and Brando doesn't have one. In fact, he ignores it. Most critics of the film have noted that Brando changes or forgets his accent throughout. This elementary fact should immediately damn his performance but there are other things like his self-indulgent slow takes and replies and that bullshit bathtub sequence which had no characterization point except to allow Brando to do his star turn. Of course, most of his actions are unmotivated because of the rotten script but that doesn't let Brando off the hook.

Brando has been hyped for so long that he must really believe that he is the world's greatest film actor. Pauline Kael's ridiculously overripe review of him in *Tango* (another overrated film) must have cinched it for him. Now he could do anything. Most people evidently forget that many of his roles are extensions of the dumb-ox he played in *Streetcar* (*Waterfront, Wild One, Zapata*) and that even Burt Lancaster has attempted more varied roles.

Most actors and critics would agree that one of the actor's greatest tools is his voice. Brando simply doesn't have one; I mean a voice with interesting tonal quality, not a stage voice. Brando compounds this basic defect by not projecting, and in *talking* films that is ridiculous, as well as fatal. In *The Nightcomers*, he has an important speech to some children which is practically unintelligible.

To go on proving the obvious is absurd. Olivier could have been a screen idol, with his looks, but he chose to be only one of the great actors of our time. When he chooses to appear in a film, he is still more interesting in a cameo than Brando is throughout an entire film. The deciding difference that most film critics probably won't understand is that Olivier is an actor and Brando is a performer.

Arthur Ross
Los Angeles

More on Morris

This letter is written in strong and emotional support of Barry K. Grant's criticism of George Morris' review of *The Missouri Breaks*. I had the same antagonisms toward the review when it appeared as did Grant, but I was not moved to comment simply because so many reviews share the faults I recognized.

Since Grant did write, I was interested in the fact that Morris replied. The reply is an insult to our intelligence as readers. It confirms Grant's criticism and doesn't even respond to the issues raised by Grant. Instead of answering Grant's query on assumed aesthetics, Morris suggests that we examine his published writing. I have done so and find that no clarification exists in that writing. It is simply a compounding of the same problems raised by Grant.

Because Grant criticizes with zeal and conviction, Morris responds by suggesting that Grant is somehow neurotic because he is at a university. The response, he says, "smacks a bit of an academic mind repressed behind the walls of higher learning longing to release itself from its stuffy enclave." The statement is

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revealing. It indicates Mr. Morris' lack of contact with what is going on in film study at many universities, and marks him clearly as a writer and reviewer of a previous decade when film analysis consisted of people of education and breeding telling us what was good and what was bad, rather that what film is, how it can be examined, and what we can learn from its examination beyond the application of a nebulous pattern of taste presented to us as if it were a developed aesthetic. Mr. Morris' review of *Network*, by the way, confirms my opinion.

I assume Mr. Morris' response to me would be similar to that given to Grant. It is unlikely, given his response as published, that it would be otherwise. However, I did not write this letter to change his mind or begin a battle (or continue one). The readers of *Take One* will make their decisions without—I hope—being bullied by someone's assertion of abstract qualities.

I agree with one thing Morris states. For better or worse, he does stand or fall by his review.

Stuart M. Kaminsky
The School of Speech
Northwestern University
Evanston, Illinois

Youngblood appreciated

Thank you for Gene Youngblood. From *Expanded Cinema* to his column in your magazine, he has consistently written articulate 'laments' which challenge and uphold the moral necessity for individual imagination, perception, and creativity. At the same time, he bypasses the elitist trails of an insecure avant garde which loses itself in dictatorial clichés and a myth of snobbery. In a time when culture has been divided into camps of lazy perception and poppish smarts through association, Gene Youngblood is gratefully welcomed.

Steven Kornajcik
New York City

Ray's dud

The following is an excerpt from a letter we received from Herman Weinberg which gives Josef von Sternberg's side of the Macao *story.*

Sternberg, with whom I first saw *Macao*, told me one of the few people who ever saw his original version of the film was Walter Starkie, professor of Spanish, Irish and Italian literature and a former director of the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, and translator of *Don Quixote*, who thought it quite beautiful. (Surely the director of *Shanghai Express* knew how to handle a Chinese subject.) As for Mr. Hughes, being not only rich but very rich, and because he was then young with time on his side, he could indulge his veriest whim. He held up the release of Sternberg's other film for him, *Jet Pilot*, for seven years because he kept adding flying scenes to it, since flying interested him, not films. "Both films," said Sternberg, "were for me unsuccessful assignments, as the controlling factors were a dozen assorted and constantly shifting producers — never the director... If Mr. Hughes thought he had a bad picture when he saw my version, after Nick Ray re-shot it he had two bad pictures." Mr. Ray's film pleased no one, least of all the critics, being a critical and box-office dud. The final bizarre touch is that Sternberg's name was retained for Nick Ray's released version to help "sell" the picture.

Herman Weinberg

Yawn

Just a short note to let you know that *Take One* has become so pretentious (and so boring) that it is practically impossible to read it.

I used to enjoy it immensely. Now, I just flip through it, and put it away. Too bad.

Art Hister
Vancouver, B.C.

Junk art

Susan Schenker's review of Brian DePalma's *Carrie* (in *Take One*'s January issue) begins with the admission that "the film really works," but from there on she does little but find fault with the film. For me, *Carrie* is the year's best film, especially its dazzling technical displays by DePalma, editor Paul Hirsch, cinematographer Mario Tosi, and composer Pino Donaggio. I believe that the film deserved much more attention in your pages than Ms. Schenker's less-than-half-a-page dismissal of its "junior high mentality."

I would rather have read a review discussing any of the many, many interesting questions that are brought up by this film— e.g., the unusually bizarre portrayal of American religion and motherhood; the incredible undertones of dark comedy all through the film; the fact that the telekinesis was just a "Maguffin" for the real story told about high school life; or the way DePalma transcends the junk movie material to create junk art. Brian DePalma is the most innovatively brilliant young American director working today. I don't think your reviewer is touching what he's all about. Anyone who refers to the breathtaking dream-world of *Obsession* as a "mishmash" has no concept of DePalma's genius at all. With his last two films he emerges as the finest cinema-storyteller since Hitchcock himself.

Lynn Munroe
Flint, Michigan

Dirk Bogarde as Clive, in Claude's fantasy, from Alain Resnais' **Providence.**

Alain Resnais' Providence

Reviewed by
James Monaco

Clive Langham has trouble with his rectum. He is 78, a fairly well-known writer at the end of the line. He spends one nasty night in his Victorian country estate, Providence, attempting to deal with his proctological problems, his past, his children, and his art. It is a settling of accounts. Suppositories help him physically; nothing seems to help him psychologically. He is — simply — blocked. During the course of the long night, half-asleep, half-drunk, he spins several dozen scenes using as characters his son Claude, a lawyer, Claude's wife Sonia, and a strange man named Kevin. Three-quarters of the film *Providence,* directed by Alain Resnais and written by David Mercer, is composed of those scenes, together with Clive's insistent, relentless, impatient criticism of them.

The scenes don't work. The backgrounds are imperfectly sketched. The characters are just this side of absurd. The dialogue is too patly witty for its own good. The story can't be found. There are all sorts of problems. The wrong characters open doors, enter the wrong scenes. They get mixed up in mid-scene on occasion: Kevin forgets he's Kevin, starts speaking Claude's dialogue. Kevin's younger brother Dave, a football star, has an annoying habit of jogging purposefully into view just as Clive thinks he might have a handle on a scene. Clive can't figure out how he gets there or what to do with them. A writer's nightmare. Clive offers excuses to himself and to us: "If one has led a fatuous life, one might as well have fatuous nightmares."

The settings are ludicrous. Claude and Sonia live in a mauve and taupe mausoleum which is breathtakingly effete. Clive can't even keep the details straight. The rooms keep changing from scene to scene. Halfway through the nightmare (the story, and the film) Clive decides to pair Claude up with a mistress. The imagination is weak. The mistress Helen looks suspiciously like Clive's dead wife Molly. Eventually she gives up all pretenses to being a separate character and speaks both parts. Clive can't be bothered sketching in a background for her. He returns again and again to the same veranda, a cyclorama — a cheap, obvious one — providing the cliché'd backdrop.

The shape of the story's a mess, as well. Old Clive never gets further than setting up a bored, tired, febrile triangle. Claude prosecutes Kevin for murder. Sonia takes up with Kevin. Claude is bored ("I don't actually *smell* the sex... hasn't there *been* any?!"). Claude takes up with Helen. Dull. A thousand British drawing-room bourgeois dramas. Everyone speaks in well-knit paragraphs. Everyone knows much too much. It's all too, too predictable. It's No Exit. Everyone reviles everyone else and the structure of the piece rests on finding new ways to express the revulsion, the contempt for their lives, the mistakes of the past.

But at the same time as Clive is spinning a yarn which does him no credit his providential master David Mercer is playing tricks, too. As Clive sinks deeper and deeper into the night and the wine and the pain the scene becomes less intentional fiction, more dreamlike. Clive's Claude spends more of his time reviling his father. Helen — a weak attempt at a character to begin with — increasingly falls into playing Molly, the suicide wife and mother. Eventually Clive and Claude, father and son, author and character, are mano à mano, slashing at each other with musty family arguments. Clive loses control often. At one point he has the incongruous footballer haul off and sock Claude. Claude goes sprawling across the phoney veranda in balletic mock pain. Clive, remorseful, does the scene over. The one weakness in *Providence* — and it may be fatal for some viewers — is that the story-outside-the-story is just as fatuous as the story-within-the-story. Who actually *cares* about Clive and Claude and Molly?

But that's a bit unfair to Mercer, I think. It seems clear he felt it was necessary to give his characters the same quality of plot to play out that they would give themselves. The point of *Providence* is fiction. Cinephiles who know Alain Resnais's meticulous, carefully focused work will quickly ascribe the materials of *Providence* to him. This is the seventh feature film he has completed in 17 years; each one has dealt directly and intensively with time and memory and fiction. Mercer, whose work is not so well known outside of England, has been developing in precisely the same direction, however, and *Providence* would have looked pretty much as it does even if, say, Joseph Losey had directed it.

All the major elements of the film are Mercer's — at least to begin with. Claude prosecutes Kevin for shooting an old man. Kevin says he was doing him a favor. The old man was turning into a werewolf. Later, Kevin turns into a werewolf and Claude returns the favor. People have had this hairy propensity in Mercer's work ever since *A Suitable Case for Treatment* (1962), the play which served as a basis for Karel Reisz's film *Morgan.* During the late sixties, Mercer devoted several stage and television pieces to the kind of marital infighting which characterizes Claude's and Sonia's marriage, and which provides an elusive secondary interest throughout much of *Providence.* As for the fall into fiction out of controlled reality, Mercer had a dry run with this in *Duck Song* (1974). In the seventies, filmgoers probably know Mercer best as the author of the screenplay for Ken Loach's *Family Life* (*Wednesday's Child,* 1972) based on his 1967 television play, *In Two Minds.* The differences between the intensely verisimilitudinous Loach film and Resnais's distilled fictional fantasy are striking, of course, but the same impetus gives rise to both. Mercer — who used to be known in the sixties as a "political" playwright — has moved increasingly towards a focused concern for the function of individuality: it comes out as schizophrenia in *Family Life,* as novelist's nightmare in *Providence;* both films are obsessed with the

James Monaco is currently at work on a critical biography of Alain Resnais to be published by Secker and Warburg and Oxford University Press.

damage families do to people. For Clive Langham, fiction is family: what he does, as author to Claude, is fully balanced by what Claude, in Clive's imagination, does to Clive. They savage each other, and that is the dramatic fulcrum of the film.

What really holds our interest throughout most of it, however, is not the drama but the play. Clive's nightmare is an actor's dream. As

"The one weakness in *Providence* is that the story-outside-the-story is just as fatuous as the story-within-the-story."

Claude. Dirk Bogarde plays with virtuoso broad panache. He is slimily thin, outrageously effete, wonderfully nasty. He displays an entire catalogue of impetuously nasty moves and looks. David Warner's Kevin is as dumb and mushy as Bogarde's Clive is sinewy and sharp. Warner, his massive, craggy, pocked face looming like a parody of Mount Rushmore, has never hulked better. The two of them are obviously enjoying their music-hall melodrama enormously.

If Resnais and Mercer had stopped there, however, the result would have been simply camp. The key to the conception lies elsewhere. Resnais has purposefully cast two quintessentially American actresses in the major women's roles. Ellen Burstyn and Elaine Stritch are utterly, thoroughly, magnificently wrong for the roles. If you had been able to take Mercer's mock stage dialogue seriously in the mouth's of Bogarde and Warner because at least they're English, any remaining shred of credulity disappears once Elaine Stritch opens her wonderfully American mouth. The fey British stage dialogue coagulates in it. Resnais has calculated this effect carefully. Burstyn might just be believable as the American wife of Bogarde. Stritch, the American mistress, clearly is not. Just in case the point is missed, Tania Lopert is given a turn a little later in the film as Claude's secretary. She has listened impassively and silently through two of his vicious harangues against his dying father. Finally, she has had enough. (Clive has decided that she is on his side.) She rips into a short speech in pure New York ending with Clive's clincher: "He's had me more than once! Why shouldn't I be fucked by a genius!" Shades of Judy Holliday. Blackout. Clive loves the joke. So too, I think, do Resnais and Mercer. *Providence* is Alain Resnais's first comedy.

But the irony of the interplay of the fictions Clive invents can go only so far. Three-quarters of the way through *Providence*, Resnais and Mercer bring us back to ground. Clive has got ungently through the good night. It is noon. He is sitting in a lawn chair in the sun outside. It is the real outside. Birds sing, crickets chirp, cicadas buzz. Life. Reality. We are free of the suffocating cycloramas, the self-parodic, delirious Miklos Rosza music track, the precious mauve and taupe decor, the deadening post-synched soundtrack, the claustrophobic stagey interiors. The effect is exhilarating.

In the long sequence that follows, Claude no longer has fictional control; it's relinquished to Mercer and Resnais. From all we can see, Claude and Sonia are quite contentedly married (not, as Clive would have had it, bitchy characters out of English marital dramas). The real Claude is striking: subdued, cautious, almost obsequious. It's entirely clear that he finds his father as difficult as his father has dreamt and written that he finds him. But he hardly has the cold, satanic wit his father/author ascribed to him during the night. It's Clive's birthday and his children have brought him presents: a giant penknife, once said to have been owned by Ernest Hemingway, a new novel — *The Scales of Time*, by one "Robert Kelvin." Clive shows proper contempt for it. What no one tells us is that "Robert Kelvin" is a refugee from Mercer's 1969 semi-autobiographical *On The Eve of Publication*, and that Kelvin's picture on the back of the book is David Mercer's. We are not out of the fictional woods yet.

There is still some lugubrious Rosza to go round. And, on second thought, isn't it a bit much for Claude and Kevin (who, we discover, is Clive's "favorite bastard") to spend all that time in the background marvelling over a baby racoon? Yes, the last sequence of *Providence* is rather egregious. The trick is that it is not by any means so awfully fictive as the first three-quarters of the film, and by comparison we accept it, at least for a while. Alone at the end, waiting to die, having sent his loving children away, John Gielgud as Clive almost brings it off. As the dusk settles its protective cloak, caressing the brooding old house of Clive Langham's fictions... he farts and keels over dead. (No, *no*, NO, froggy!)

Let's try again.

. . . and by comparison, we accept it, at least for awhile. Alone at the end with his beloved bottle of Chablis, John Gielgud as Claude settles the dusk over its protective cloak, and the old mansion, bereft of years, croaks. . . (It's getting worse.)

. . . at least for awhile. Solitary, finally, Gielgud as Claude settles into his chair as the dusk falls and the old house broods. He reaches for the white wine. "I think," he says, contented and resigned, "there is time for just one more." He gets up and walks ever so slowly into the house as we pull away, the heavy music starts up again, and the credits roll.

Providence is funnier than you think it is. In fact, it's funner than *I* thought it was, and I'm very proud of having written this entire review without having once mentioned Luigi Pirandello. ●

Art Carney and Lily Tomlin face danger together in **The Late Show.**

Robert Benton's The Late Show

Reviewed by James Monaco

Ira Wells has trouble with his stomach. He is in his sixties, a thoroughly unknown ex-private eye operating out of L.A., and at the end of the line. He has a perforated ulcer. He also has a gimpy leg. He wears a hearing aid and glasses. He's not much use anymore. *The Late Show* is his last revenge, and I especially admire the style with which he passes the torch to Margo Sperling, a kooky "doll" who's got more sense and life in her, as Lily Tomlin plays her, than any woman in an American film since the forties.

The Late Show is written and directed by Robert Benton, of the firm of Benton and Newman, screenwriters. Benton has directed once before: *Bad Company* (1972), a Western of sorts and a superior movie that never got its

Associate Editor **James Monaco** has just finished *How to Read a Film*, published by Oxford University Press.

due. Benton's second film makes it clear that he's got to be considered one of the most exciting American directors working today. Forget *Farewell My Lovely*, forget *Chinatown*, ignore for the moment *The Long Goodbye*. *The Late Show* has it all over those pastiches — primarily because it was written from our perspective. It's not a forties movie made in the seventies; it's a thoroughly seventies movie made about the forties.

Art Carney's Ira Wells knows this. Benton tells us he does in the opening establishing shot. We discover Ira writing a novel. It is entitled "Naked Girls and Machine Guns." It is not going to be a success. Ira has finished half a page. It is awful. But what else can an out of work, over the hill private dick in the City of Angels do for himself? Last year he spent six months flat on his back in the VA hospital with two ulcer operations. He won't go through that again. He can't hear very well. He limps. Only one thing for it: the book. Turn 34 years on the job into a saleable fictional commodity.

In his own way, Ira has a sense that this is where it's at. As the camera leaves the upright Underwood, scene of the novelist's crime, it pans past stacks of pulp paperbacks, yellowed photos of Ira in his heyday, finally the late show on the TV, unreeling the past incessantly, turning all those old moods and values — that used to be real for Ira Wells — into interchangeable masks and poses, subjects for a Woody Allen parody and a skein of latter-day Marlowe and Spade ripoffs. It's sad.

Credits over, the door opens. It's Howard Duff as Harry Regan, Ira's ex-partner. He falls in, and bleeds to death in Ira's bed. Ira's eulogy: "You were real good company, Harry. The best. The very best." That's what he says, but you know what he's thinking: "When a man's partner's killed, he's supposed to do something about it. It doesn't make any difference what you thought of him. He was your partner, and you're supposed to do something about it." By the end of the movie, he has.

But *The Late Show* isn't really about revenge, doublecrosses and figuring out whodunit. It's about Ira and Margo. It's not a romance, really. . . it's more of an essay in lifestyles. That the thirty-year-old actress/ agent/ dress designer/ fence's helper/ dealer/ psychoanalysand develops such a strong feeling for the sixty-year-old macho/ loner private eye is honestly moving. Carney and Tomlin make it so.

Margo at first seems like a prime specimen of late-sixties/ early-seventies kook. She approaches Ira first to see if he'll take on the job of getting back her lost cat. "It's a two-bit job," he says, and walks off, making contemptuous little brush-off gestures behind his back. She screams after him in desperation: "Give this little cat a break!" A little later, he goes to see her at her overdecorated apartment. She offhandedly lights incense, and describes a minor character to Ira: "He's this guy, a sort of a tuna. We used to have a sort of sexual interlude. . . Go with the flow." She starts out kooky, but she develops. When she and Ira meet up with the Brigid O'Shaughnessy character (Joanna Cassidy) and find out her name is "Laura," Margo is quick on the take, humming softly in the background "just a face in the mi-i-isty night. . ." She's also capable of describing a situation — so Ira can understand it — as "copacetic." She goes more than halfway to bridge the gap between herself and this relic of *film noir*.

In the middle of the film, she gets to drive a van on the obligatory wild car chase, ploughing through a dozen suburban lawns and picket fences. She loves it! At home later she goes into a nonstop monologue: "Ira, I feel so *high*, I feel like I dropped *acid*!. . . Didn't I take care of business!. . . I swear to God I feel just like, you know, Nick and Nora!" She almost has him there. She's almost convinced him to move in next door and take her in as a partner. "Who?" Ira asks. "You know, Phyllis Kirk and Peter Lawford." It's a poignant moment. She knows the myths; she doesn't quite have them right, remembering the TV stars, not the movie stars. A let-down. "Listen, doll. Let's get one thing straight: I'm a loner" — Ira's exit line.

Yet it's Margo who figures out how to unknot the tangled string of the plot, it's Margo who has the psychic energy, and at the end of the film, both of them having very stylishly taken care of business, they are sitting together on a park bench in front of a cemetery. There is an ad on the back of the bench — just a bit too obvious — for the Hollywood Wax Museum. Ira asks tentatively: "Is that place next to you still open?" The bus comes. The bus leaves. The bench is empty.

Margo and Ira would be enough by themselves to make *The Late Show* a landmark of sorts, but they're not alone. They are surrounded by a carefully crafted group of supporting characters. Bill Macy plays Charlie Hatter, the double-crossing, two-bit go-between with the precisely trimmed mustache who is at home in any decade from the twenties through the seventies. Ira's chief nemesis, Ron Birdwell (Eugene Roche), and his sidekick Jeff Lamar (John Considine) are considerably more contemporary. Fat Ron wears Terrycloth jumpsuits with cute RB monograms. A fence, Ron knows his merchandise and lovingly rolls his tongue around the brand names like a late night television salesman. To get his wife back he's willing to offer "a brand new Coupe de Ville! Your choice of color!" and throw in a "Vitamaster Portable Steambath" as well. For his part, Jeff Lamar sports pure cashmere jackets and gold chains, both of which Ira takes a particular dislike to. Laura Birdwell is duplicitous enough to make Brigid O'Shaughnessy look like a straight arrow. Caught at the scene of the crime, Laura sits down with Ira and confesses, "I am going to be totally open and honest with you. I am going to lay myself naked for you," in tones so soulful and breathy Ira almost forgets her cleavage. "Holy Moly!" comments Margo.

These six actors work together as if they'd been playing ensemble for years, and much of the pleasure of *The Late Show* is due to their precisely calculated performances: every gesture is perfect, every line delivered with genius, the choices are inspired. In the background you can hear the true electric hum of talent. But the ultimate success of *The Late Show* depends on Benton's overall conception. He knows where we've been, he knows where we are, and he has a lot that's true to say about the connection between the two. *The Late Show* is a movie you can sink your teeth into: subtle and brash by turns, put together with brio. It's about living, not writing, and it's thoroughly copacetic.

Benton's screenwriting partner David Newman has directed recently as well. His film *The Crazy American Girl* (1975) was produced and shot in France. American distributor Twentieth Century-Fox has so far seen fit to leave it on the shelf. Entirely different in tone and approach from Benton's two films, Newman's is perhaps more ambitious. It is certainly more difficult, for it is essentially a film of French moods, tempos, and concerns shot with Americans. This is clearly what scares Fox. In order to have a feel for *The Crazy American Girl*, an audience probably should have equal experience with French and American mores and film styles. It is to be hoped, however, that American audiences will eventually have a chance to decide for themselves.

NEWMAN AND BENTON FILMOGRAPHY: Wrote for *Esquire* in the mid-sixties. *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), *There Was a Crooked Man* (1970), *What's Up, Doc?* (1972), *Bad Company* (1972), *Oh, Calcutta* (1972), *The Crazy American Girl* (1975, David Newman and Leslie Newman), *The Late Show* (1976, Robert Benton), *Superman* (1976, Benton, Newman, and Newman). Unproduced: "Money's Tight," "Hubba-Hubba," "Floriana," and others. ●

Nagisa Oshima's In the Realm of the Senses

Reviewed by
Bruce Berman

Yes, censorship lives. But at the (now infamous) New York Film Festival press screening of Nagisa Oshima's *In the Realm of the Senses*—the very screening at which U.S. Customs official Elinor Suske elected to confiscate the print—I was in many ways more fascinated by the sophisticated, "professional" audience's initial response (or *lack* of response) to what struck me as a complex and in some ways disconcertingly intimate exploration of the perimeters of need, sexual, emotional, and economic, than the controversy over its seizure.

Oshima's film, based on a true story which dominated Japanese newspaper headlines in 1936, pits a beautiful geisha, Sada (no pun intended), and a gangster hotel owner, Kichizo, as lovers with fires of passion so torrid that Sada, at Kichizo's apparent encouragement, strangles her "master" and then (perhaps not at his encouragement) castrates him. Presumably, it was as a reaction to this graphic scene that the New York Customs Office Chief stepped in. What is most

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saddening here is that such "positive" negative publicity will no doubt further divert viewers' attentions from the more enduring complexities of Oshima's often deceptive film.

Most intriguing, for me, about this cooly erotic exploration, which, as *Variety* aptly described, "barely holds a candle to the kind of ("sexplicit") fare made in the U.S. and now shown in every major city in America," are the audience reactions it elicited (though I am tempted to say "illicited"). Of the people I spoke with following the screening and subsequent press conference (in which director Oshima proved to be predictably evasive and Festival Director Roud unusually irritable), virtually all were either unmoved by

"...a peculiarly 'political' exercise, and one in which a woman's position in society is examined with uncharacteristic sensitivity."

the repeated semi-explicit inter-play or slightly hostile to it, expecting something considerably more heated.

In any case, the critical kudos that hailed the film's Cannes premiere were conspicuously absent here. Even Richard Eder, in a characteristically mindless review run in the following morning's *New York Times*, went so far as to say that in the film "sex is never divorced from emotion, and this, for such a graphic presentation, is a novelty."

Perhaps we've been too conditioned to regard successful screen sex solely on the basis of its titillation quotient and rarely, if ever, in view of its contextual significance. Neither particularly schooled in nor acclimated to the study of Japanese history or women's plight within it, I was, and am still, somehow compelled to regard *In the Realm of the Senses* as a peculiarly "political" exercise, and one in which a woman's position in society is examined with sensitivity uncharacteristic of most Western filmmakers.

Kichizo is "master." Sada, we so easily forget, is merely a geisha under Kichizo's wife's employ: a hired hand (or womb, depending on how one views it) existing only to satisfy; satisfying, it might be said, only to exist.

Certainly it is in Sada's best interests to appear ready, willing, and above all, able for pleasure whether she is in fact or not. She must effectively please or be cast aside. And like all successful geishas, she knows she must massage not only her virile master's genitals, but his masculine ego as well. As a woman schooled in the finest subtleties of her art, it is necessary that she "perform" flawlessly; that she speak and act with womanly precision.

One of the many mysteries to be confronted here is why did the viewers I spoke with not see through Sada's initial theatrics? (Or why did I see them?). And, if at all, at what point does Sada really begin to love her master? When she tells him she must have him? When she murders—castrates him? Never? Always?

Shots of Sada's feet bound and deformed, as was the Japanese custom for thousands of

Ah love! Eiko Matsuda and Tatsuya Fuji in a scene from Oshima's In the Realm of the Senses.

years, conspicuously present themselves from time to time, as do lush sunsets, drenching rain, and melting snow, objects of particular sensuality for the contemporary as well as the historic Japanese. What is unclear is whether these shots are presented in contrasting juxtaposition of the Sada-Kichizo entanglement, or in reflection of it. Unlike Mr. Eder, I am uncertain that the film's sex is "never divorced from emotion." Even from an esteemed *Times* critic, such simpleminded reductivism praises the film less than it belittles it.

Despite Sada's convincing if not volcanic multiple orgasms (often achieved at the seeming drop of her master's hat) and endless words of adulation, I'm somewhat skeptical as to the sincerity of the couple's initial love-play. Neither I myself, nor the women I've known, have come by such passion so facilely but then neither I, nor they, have ever been projected on a 40-foot screen in a 1:1.85 aspect ratio. With Oshima, sex and its accompanying emotions seldom take on wholly positive or negative connotations, but tend to teeter on a precipice in the intriguing (erotic?) "realm" that attempts to divide "good" and "bad."

Other ambiguities abound: save for the cigarettes that Kichizo smokes and several other isolated items, we are never firmly aware of in which period the film is set until it is almost over. It could be 1536 almost as easily as it is 1936. Not until we observe Kichizo encountering a contingent of Japanese troops is this timeless reality pierced. Curiously, it is never clear whether this timeless quality points to the "positive" energy of Sada and Kichizo's strange relationship, or is something which reaffirms the existential quagmire in which they, and particularly Sada, are steeped, or both. Oshima's mise-en-scène carefully refrains from easily-read sign posts.

Throughout the film (at least on the surface) Sada, it should not be forgotten, remains a geisha, a prostitute, a whore. Under such apparently uncondusive circumstances it is difficult to imagine that she can "truly" love any man, let alone her mistress' master. However, in *In the Realm of the Senses* there are enough moments where Sada's very enslavement seems to be alternately and even concurrently reinforced and transcended. (Specifically when and why is the film's unsettling essence.)

Sada's existence becomes so dominated by Kichizo's that we are never very certain of anything. When Sada murders Kichizo at the end of the film, has she simultaneously consumed—cut off herself, or has she finally been purged of her possessor? Has she really learned to live within the rigid confines of her political precariousness or, perhaps, because of it? Is her survival primarily emotional or economic, or is Oshima implying that the two are inextricably bound?

In the Realm of the Senses' answers are not to be read like the information conveyed by some reassuring sub-title. It is a difficult film which takes one in with a subtle force seldom accomplished in even the most intelligent Western films. It takes one to the very bowels of the paradoxically fantastic and frightening "realm" which, I sense, all intense involvements must to some extent traverse. Needless to say, this is a film rich in probing associations; and one as boldly un-pornographic as its shocking confiscation in the name of "public decency" is despicable. I hope it will soon be available. ●

Elaine May's Mikey and Nicky

Reviewed by Michael Tarantino

Nicky (John Cassavetes) is a two-bit hood who has outlived his value to the local mob. Mikey (Peter Falk) is his long time friend who is out to set him up for the final dot on his contract. After rambling through an inferno of bars, buses, and burial grounds, Nicky is gunned down outside Mikey's door as the morning comes.

From the outset, the film places a great deal of weight on the shoulders of its two principal actors. May has taken the trappings of male camaraderie, as seen through the antics of

Best buddies...John Cassavetes and Peter Falk in a scene from May's **Mikey and Nicky.**

Cassavetes and Falk, and fashioned a film based on a continual flux of characterization. (Enough cannot be said about the contributions to the finished film of these two actors. Despite all the protestations of self-indulgence which have affixed themselves to Cassavetes' films, his characterizations, along with Falk's, reverberate far beyond the immediate scope of any single work. Together, their machine gun-like interplay is sometimes boring, frequently long-winded, yet always vital. Throughout *Mikey and Nicky,* they are never "reading lines," and it is this ease of delivery which informs the film's tone.)

The pairing of Cassavetes and Falk in what is virtually a two-character play invites the inevitable comparison to *Husbands.* Indeed, one cannot separate the acting style from the actor. And so all the familiar characteristics remain, such as the interminable arguments or the sophomoric clowning in the streets. Yet Elaine May is not merely a woman under the influence. *Mikey and Nicky* is a film about male camaraderie *in spite of itself.* Unlike *Husbands,* and, to a lesser extent, *A Woman Under the Influence, Mikey and Nicky* is concerned with the fragile base upon which such relationships are built, rather than establishing the phenomenon itself. Thus, the emotional ties that have been formed through childhood and adolescence are taken for granted in order to concentrate on the differences which ultimately lead to betrayal: in this case, Mikey's sense of rational decorum as pitted against Nicky's predictable unpredictability.

May has managed the perfect blend, utilizing the improvisatory techniques of her actors in order to re-inforce the film's narrative thrust. As disjointed as it may seem, each stray piece of business belongs. Ultimately, the film's "look" reflects itself, and not the years of production hassles and Stroheim-esque tales of Elaine May's nights in the editing room which preceded its release.

Whereas *A New Leaf* and *The Heartbreak Kid suggested* malaise, *Mikey and Nicky* delivers. It opens with Nicky stretched out in a seedy hotel, his ulcers killing him from lack of food. The editing is extremely disjunctive, frustrating the viewer's attempt to define the space. When Mikey comes to help, he is locked out. This becomes the leitmotif which joins the disparate pieces as the night winds down. However, from this point on, it is Nicky who is refused entrance — to his lover's, to his wife's, and finally, to Mikey's front door. By re-inforcing a particular theme, May invites us to rethink the ways in which it has been used. Thus, the scene in which Mikey is locked out of Nicky's hotel room may be viewed in reverse — it is Nicky who is locked *in.*

It is only because of the film's rambling sense of narrative that these types of strategies are allowed to work. It is that rare American film which defines the event in terms of its own essence. As the assassin's car chases down the man Mikey has identified as Nicky, the suspense inherent in such a scene is undercut by his own repeated pleas of "Lemme out of this car." This is a film with a question at its center, rather than a multitude of answers. Did Mikey waver in his assignment to set his friend up for the kill? Despite his actions at the end, there are no easy solutions. He tells his wife to go to bed, as if it were all a bad dream. The night has been reduced to a split second, and has started all over again ●

Federico Fellini's Casanova

Reviewed by Gideon Bachmann

When Fellini's new film, *Il Casanova,* was taken to court in Northern Italy in the beginning of January 1977, accused of obscenity, the judge quickly decided that there was nothing offensive in it. This occurred in the country which has still to allow the showing of Bertolucci's *Last Tango in Paris* or of Pasolini's *Salo or the 120 Days of Sodom,* and the country of which all four of the concerned gentlemen: Bertolucci, Fellini, Pasolini, and Casanova, are natives.

In fact, there is nothing particularly sexy in this tale of the perennial seducer, although we are treated to innumerable graphic presentations of the sexual act. What transpires, instead, from Fellini's fantastical reworking of the best-known episodes from the autobiographical writings of the man whose name has become a synonym of promiscuity, is that the incessant sexual satisfaction of an endless array of females had been, for its perpetrator, rather a chore.

One would have thought that promiscuity without emotion would have been an ideal subject for Fellini — and he may have thought so himself — but this does not turn out to be a film about women. As they were for Casanova so they now serve Fellini: women are vessels and instruments for the expression of a personal problem. The sweating, labouring grimace of the heaving love stakhanovite is the recurrent image punctuating the narrative. We do not see the women below, but we recognize the victim above.

Fellini claims to have discovered his distaste for the character of Giacomo Casanova only after he signed a contract to make a film based on the 18th-century rogue's life. In the end, he struggled with the project for three years, had to work on sets built in accordance with a script later changed almost completely, and has succeeded in translating his own ambivalent attitude into images.

Some scenes, like the homosexual seduction in a Turkish harem, were elaborately shot and discarded in the cutting; others, like the

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Gideon Bachmann Collection

Casanova (back to camera) chatting up his favorite prey in **Fellini's Casanova.**

love marathon in Lord Tallow's palace, had their action and significance completely altered in the process of shooting. Dialogues were freely jettisoned or re-written, often as late as in the final dubbing of the voices. Every sexual activity except the most straight forward has finally been excised from the script or was left on the cutting room floor. This includes Casanova's affair with his own daughter, a fling with a ten-year-old orphan, his being mounted by a two-metre-forty elephantine giantess and his surprising her, while engaged in an attempt to drown himself, as she emits urine "with the potency of a horse."

Also gone are lengthy verbal encounters with the Pope and with Voltaire, all the details of the famous escape from the notorious prison, the "Leads" of Venice, and a variety of social and political asides. The changes have caused the work to be less inspired; gone is the charm of all-consuming passion and voracious sensuality, but gone also are the more obvious attempts of Casanova to garner respect in quarters other than trickery and conquest. We are left with an image of a sad sexual athlete, caught in the web of his cultural aspirations, but exposed as a dilettante not unlike the Latin Lover of today's Roman summer streets.

"Refusing to be Fellini's image of him, Casanova defied his creative intention. One is almost tempted to say, 'no wonder they didn't get along.'"

There are other contemporary dimensions to the film. The image of an upstart in a world that applauds only success, and its master only as long as that lasts; of the purveyor of entertainment collecting acclaim but not love; of the ever-failing narcissist felled by his own social strife, discarded and derided, aging, by the society that feigns complicity only to see him strut and finally stumble; and that of the craftsman perfecting a single idea which he proceeds to try to sell, bigger and always more elaborate, but never again new, for the rest of his life — are these not also attributes, in our modern age, of the film director, and could they not apply, in the most tragic sense, to this particular one, as a filmed, biographical nightmare?

There is no doubt, in any case, that Fellini has personalised the central character. Casanova is an old obsession of his: repeatedly, in interviews, and as far back as the long pause between the making of *Nights of Cabiria* (1956) and *La Dolce Vita* (1959), when asked what subjects he'd like next to tackle, Fellini has mentioned this work, grouping it with *Orlando Furioso* and *Satyricon*. Like most Italians, he must have fantasized about the legendary prowess as a child, only to find now, upon researching, that his hero was far from being the romantic Don Giovanni with whom he is so often, in the popular mind, identified. The "real" Casanova, emerging from the boasting pages of the *Memoirs*, exploded the Freudian bubble, like a father figure hated because found wanting in the flesh.

Fellini is a visonary storyteller operating in images and time with what in literary terms would be called metaphors, alliterations, hyperbole, and rhetoric, whose stylistic invention is optical, exaggerated, symbolic, and totally opposed to the Italian tradition of neorealism, where instead of the mass, the

wide sway, the exterior standing in for the individual, the individual stands in for the mass. The central character in a Fellini film is the *ambiente;* there are — certainly since *8½* — no real heroes. What allegory, then, could he derive from this boudoir hero, who does not even stand for the society of which he was but victim? Casanova, having really lived, couldn't be treated as a fable. Refusing to be Fellini's image of him, Casanova defied his creative intention. One is almost tempted to say, "no wonder they didn't get along."

I am told that some of this was reflected in Fellini's relationship to Donald Sutherland, who incongruously plays the Venetian. The tall, aristocratic Canadian actor is as opposed to the typical Italian traveller, seducer, small crook and utiliser of women in type as Fellini himself is opposed to Casanova; there is nothing of Cagliostro, nothing of d'Annunzio in this boy from Rimini whose most important trip has been coming to Rome, but whose fantasy so magnificently outweighs the self-aggrandizement of the chronicler of 200 years ago. Sutherland went to the trouble of reading, apparently *in toto,* Casanova's *Memoirs,* only to find upon appearing for his first day's work that all Fellini wanted him to do was to follow exact displacement instructions, certainly not the interpretation of the character he, Sutherland, had prepared. After initial displeasure he apparently accepted to play a kind of puppet, and the result, in fact, is only very little more than that.

But it is more, and the strength of the film lies in this small difference; it is this little more which makes the drama. Sutherland, inevitably and essentially Anglo-Saxon, cannot portray in a superficial, Catholic way the self-indulgent Casanova. His loser is a Protestant loser, and thus a tragic one. The court jester that Fellini was trying to create didn't turn out to be a charlatan: he turned out to be Pagliaccio.

We feel, all along and almost subliminally, the unrequited self-denigration, the fatalism with which he accepts defeat, first in society, then in bed, and finally on the simplest human level, when as a tottering old librarian in a Bohemian count's castle he is denied his daily portion of macaroni. Clever, almost Cartesian, above his peers in foxiness, but not far above his own professed Cabalistic superstitions, he knew this much: that there was no point in trusting anyone, certainly not the confessional or womanhood, and that, since his powers were limited and would, in any case, decline, his was basically a doomed existence.

He wrote his life down thirty years after his last adventures, probably inventing a great deal, and certainly inventing his steadfast Christian faith. With literary bravado he tried to hide his *échec,* both that in his life and that in his spirit. Fortunately he was too accurate an observer not to let the truth through at the seams, and fortunately, today, Fellini has personalised him sufficiently to allow the tragic image to show at the seams of Sutherland's performance and through the wearying splendor of the film's extravagance.

Certainly this is Fellini's most splendorous film. Incredible expenses were chalked up to create, around the Cinecitta pool, a Venice as splendid as the Maritime Republic could never have been, peopled by masks and costumes that defy the imagination. All this was created by Danilo Donati and lighted by Giuseppe Rotunno, hung with period paintings in the style of Longhi, Moreau, Mengs, Guardi and Jeurat, recreated and exaggerated by Fellini's school friend Rinaldo Geleng. None of it becomes real, nor was it intended to.

Undoubtedly the effort will seem useless to many who will see it as a backdrop to rather a slim story. Certainly it reiterates most of Fellini's standard obsessions: the antipodally-weighted ladies of miraculous joie-de-vivre and willingness, the monsters, dwarfs, giants, jesters, barkers, whores of all sexes and classes, and the image of the mother as lover: even the papier-maché whale from *Satyricon* and the giant wooden tub in which one is bathed and rubbed down deliciously, from *8½,* make a brief reappearance. As a whole, the film, like most recent Fellinis, is a work of arithmetical progression. It is added, strung, episode per episode, a magnificent necklace, not multiplied geometrically to create a mounting dramatic effect. It is, in this sense, pure Fellini: heaped impressionism, assailing, stunning to the eye, but finally a shell, exorbitant as only great art or pure charlatanism can be.

"We are left with an image of a sad sexual athlete, caught in the web of his cultural aspirations..."

What then does this shell, which one may accept or reject, harbour? In a significant change from the original script Fellini has laid into the mouth of a secondary character the line: "Perhaps what you really want is not to love but to die." Initially the scene had had a homosexual connotation. The line had run: "You do not know woman and you do not know yourself. You do not pursue women; you flee them. Loving that many means that what you are seeking is probably a man..." Seen in the light of Fellini's identification, on a nightmare level, with Casanova, this change assumes central importance.

If one considers that all of Fellini's work has been avowedly autobiographical, in an outward arch from youth to Rome, to the peak and crisis of *8½,* and back to the Rimini beaches like a homing pigeon with *Amarcord,* in what direction would he logically proceed from there? According to Bernardino Zapponi, who collaborated on the original script, the entire film is Casanova's dream of what his life could have been, flashed back from that mythical moment immediately preceeding death. For the spectator, the marionettes that inhabit the film like a museum offer little chance of identification. But once we accept Fellini's own identification in the nightmare he has conceived for Casanova, we can begin to read the film quite simply. The information we distill concerns not the 18th-century aspirant to the world's love, but the 20th-century one, the veteran from Cinecitta. ●

Alain Tanner's Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000

Reviewed by
Michael Tarantino

Max cannot forget the events of May of 1968. He spends his proofreader's pay in gambling halls each night. Mathilde works in an electrical appliance factory. If not for her family, she would find life inexorably dull. She is expecting her fourth child. Marco is a high-school history teacher who is loved by his students and hated by his employers for illustrating dialectical materialism with a sausage and an axe. Marcel owns a farm. He retires to his attic at night to draw pictures of his animals. At any given moment, he may burst into a metaphorical monologue on whales. Marguerite is his wife. She is concerned with maintaining the ecological balance—at least on their farm. She sleeps with the workers at night, collecting a small pittance to keep it impersonal. Madeleine works as a secretary in a bank. She helps Max expose a scheme which would have squeezed the nearby farmers from their land. She believes tantrism is the answer to everything. Max doubts this. Marie works in a supermarket, undercharging all those who are too poor to pay. One day, she undercharges Marco. Matthieu is Mathilde's husband. He gets a job on Marcel's farm shoveling manure.

Old Charles is Marie's friend who used to be a train engineer. He remarks that the difference between riding on a train and driving it is all a matter of point of view. When you are driving, you are transported into the empty space ahead, while the passenger must watch it all whisk by.

Jonah Who Will Be Twenty-Five In the Year 2000 is Alain Tanner's fifth feature film. Screened last Fall at the New York Film Festival, it represents his most cogent essay to date on the question of interpretation which has informed his work. Tanner has always been interested in establishing a politics of character. (Rosemonde of *La Salamandre* is

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Jean-Luc Bideau and Miou Miou slog along in Tanner's **Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2000.**

perhaps the best example. While not an intrinsically political character, the spectre of deterministic forces looms heavily on the edge of her movements. The investigation of her which the two male characters conduct represents the dialectic of subjective versus objective ways of seeing.) Tanner's characters are defined through the social milieu they have evolved from. They are illlustrations of political thought as opposed to being instigators. The central action in each of the films, e.g. Rosemonde's shooting her uncle, structures the narrative only insofar as it functions as an event to be *seen*, and thus interpreted. (It should be noted that John Berger, who co-wrote *Jonah*, in addition to *La Salamandre* and *Middle of the World*, has published a number of books on art criticism as seen from a Marxist perspective, i.e. *Ways of Seeing, Art and Revolution*, and *The Look of Things*.)

In *Jonah*, this starting point exists in the memories of its troupe of performers—the political turmoil of May of 1968. Whereas the effect of politics was primarily an immediate one in the earlier films, it is now seen as an ongoing determinant. Marco tells his class, "In total synthesis, time disappears." In Tanner's modern fable, seven short years after the fall, the characters each must come to grips with the realization that this stage has not yet arrived. The element of time remains crucial to the machinations of these eight political orphans. The narrative encompasses their moods of resignation and despair, hope and awareness, both individually and collectively. When they all converge on Marguerite and Marcel's farm, we are presented with eight different points of view. Old Charles' axiom becomes paradoxical. They are all drivers, yet they ride different trains.

The central character of the film is Max, who, for all intents and purposes, has remained standing still for the last seven years. Jean-Luc Bideau imparts to Max a weariness which dominates each scene he is in. He sees '68 as the year in which modern history played itself out, advancing to the edge, only to retreat. Throughout the film, Tanner uses black and white to illustrate the fantasies each character must resort to in the face of a dull or meaningless vocation. However, we rarely see Max at his job—the elements of black and white are reserved for his "memories," i.e. political involvement. He has equated his memories with finality, thus imparting to them a surrealistic edge which increases as they move back in time.

Max's disillusionment, of course, represents only one way of seeing. What separates *Jonah* from Tanner's previous films is his use of

"Jonah is also a testament to the power of open-ended filmmaking."

composites as opposed to dialectics. Each character springs from the next, off-setting and re-inforcing each other simultaneously. We witness eight people balancing optimism and pessimism with their own brands of realism. Though they may not be shaking any foundations, they are moving. When Marco is fired from yet another school, he collects his mind's forces and moves on to teach and learn from the elderly. Shortly after Matthieu has been fired for starting his own nursery school in Marcel's greenhouse, Jonah is born. And so on. Minor incidents come to shape major decisions in each character's life.

When all eight characters first converge on the farm, they are lined up together against a wall by a group of children to have their bodies traced. Five years later, the faces have been filled in. Jonah stands at the wall, the frame freezes, and music engulfs the screen. The symbol has become iconic, frozen in time, yet travelling through it.

Tanner has described *Jonah* as a synthesis of his previous work, incorporating familiar elements of character and style. Yet, it is also a testament to the power of open-ended filmmaking. Tanner realizes that only by *not* tying all the loose ends together can a film such as *Jonah* coalesce. Its success lies in its invitation to "ways of seeing." ●

Providence
An SFP Productions release. Director: Alain Resnais. Producers: Klaus Hellwig, Yves Gasser and Yves Peyrot. Screenplay: David Mercer. Camera: Ricardo Aronovitch. Art Director: Jacques Saulnier. Editor: Albert Jurgenson. Music: Miklos Rosza. Cast: Dirk Bogarde, Ellen Burstyn, John Gielgud, David Warner, Elaine Stritch, Cyril Luckham, Denis Lawson, Kathryn Leigh-Scott, Tanya Lopert.

The Late Show
A Warner Bros. release. Written and directed by Robert Benton. Producer: Robert Altman. Director of Photography: Chuck Rosher. Editors: Lou Lombardo, Peter Appleton. Music: Ken Wannberg. Set Decoration: Bob Gould. Sound: Jim Webb, Chris McLaughlin. Cast: Art Carney, Lily Tomlin, Bill Macy, Eugene Roche, Joanna Cassidy, John Considine, Ruth Nelson, John Davey, Howard Duff.

L'Empire des sens / In the Realm of the Senses
An Argos Films — Oshima Productions release. Director: Magisa Oshima. Producer: Anatole Dauman. Executive Producer: Koji Wakamatsu. Screenplay: Nagisa Oshima. Photography: Kenichi Okamoto and Hideo Ito. Editor: Keiichi Uraoka. Sound: Tetsuo Yasuda. Music: Minoru Miki. Art Director: Jusho Toda. Cast: Eiko Matsuda, Tatsuya Fuji, Taiji Tonoyama.

Mikey and Nicky
A Paramount Pictures release. Written and directed by Elaine May. Producer: Michael Hausman. Director of Photography: Victor J. Kemper. Editor: John Carter. Visual Consultant: Anthea Sylbert. Cast: Peter Falk, John Cassavetes, Ned Beatty, Carol Grace, Sanford Meisner, Joyce Van Patten, Rose Arrick.

Fellini's Casanova
A Universal release. Director: Federico Fellini. Producer: Alberto Grimaldi. Screenplay: Fellini, Bernardino Zapponi. Photography: Giuseppe Rotunno. Set design: Ruggero Mastroianni. Music: Nino Rota. Sound: Fausto Ancillai. Cast: Donald Sutherland, Margareth Clementi, Clarissa Mary Roll, Daniela Gatti, Cicely Browne, Clara Algranti, Daniel Emilfork Berenstein, Tina Aumont.

Jonah Who Will Be Twenty-Five in the Year 2000
A New Yorker Films release. Director: Alain Tanner. Screenplay: John Berger and Alain Tanner. Executive Producers: Yves Gasser and Yves Peyrot. Photography: Renato Berta. Editor: Brigitte Sousselier. Sound: Pierre Gamet. Music: Jean-Marie Senia. Cast: Jean-Luc Bideau, Myriam Boyer, Jacques Denis, Roger Jendly, Dominique Labourier, Myriam Mezieres, Miou-Miou, Rufus, Raymond Bussieres.

FRITZ LANG REMEMBERED

By Scott Eyman

Once, after a long leisurely Austrian-style lunch at the Swiss Café on Rodeo Drive, a lunch that stretched into the early evening, I told him that I wanted very much to write about him. He peered at me through the one semi-good, opaque eye that caused him so much distress and said, "So, then I'd have to be careful of what I say? No. We are friends. We will talk like friends. You may write about me later...after I'm dead."

After World War I, along with Murnau and Pabst, he had created the Golden Age of German films, an age that officially ended when he fled Germany after Hitler's rise in 1933.

In his later years, he would ironically refer to himself as "The Last of the Dinosaurs," and, relative to a magnificent species of inimitable grandeur and breadth of vision that was fast becoming extinct, he was quite correct. But, for me at least, the irony was sour, for the field had been won by mostly small-minded men making petty, fatuous films, a progression that saddened him even as he seemed to recognize its inevitability. Above everything else, he loved film.

On August 2, 1976, exhausted by age and illness, he died. He was 85 years old.

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The first thing that you noticed about Fritz Lang were his hands, enormous, massive hands whose remarkable strength might have belonged more appropriately to a Master Carpenter or a blessed-by-nature third baseman than a world-renowned director increasingly bound by the insulting infirmities of Old Age, a phrase he detested and a stage of life he abhorred.

"Never, never, did I dream being old would be like this. I have no stamina. Don't ever let anybody tell you age is a good thing; it robs you, puts you adrift, getting further and further away from what you used to be and there's nothing you can do about it.

"Some friends of Lily's (Lily Latte, Lang's associate, friend and confidante since 1933, and a woman whose guts, beauty and sensitivity are impossible to overrate) were over the other night, and to be friendly I came out to say hello. We got into a conversation and I'm afraid I shocked them when I said I no longer cared whether I lived or died. But I don't. Can you give me one single reason why I should stay alive, one experience I haven't had?"

I thought of reasons aplenty, but they were personal, even selfish ones, having more to do with the joy I found in his friendship and advice than his own admittedly frustrating physical constraints; the severe, invariably justified scalpel he would wield on my writing: "Dear Boy, who are you trying to impress with these big words? You realize that you are doing your readers a disservice?"; the whimsical letters he, an avowed cat fancier, would send to my rough-and-tumble tomcat, Archie: "meaw meeiiiaaaw, meeeoooowww, meaiaw, meaiiiiaow..."; the contemplative evenings at his house off Summit Drive, set in a suddenly dense underbrush that suggested the Australian outback where, with a Martini carefully constructed out of Tanqueray, he would contemplate the lights of Hollywood, his career and the vicissitudes of his adopted country.

"You know, I used to love and trust Americans. I still love them, but I don't trust them anymore. On every lawn there was a sign: 'Keep Smiling.' Nobody smiles anymore. There is this thing we have in this country: competition. It has ruined everybody. There used to be a saying: Love Thy Neighbor. You cannot do that anymore; he's a possible threat to your own ambitions.

"And what particularly scares me is what I see around me, in the news. The Americans today are more violent than the Germans before Hitler, and I hate Germany, hate it for what the people did to themselves.

"Other directors? I like Peckinpah (sometimes), Penn (sometimes). I like some of John Ford's films, although not his later ones. I'd never met him till about 5 years ago—, '67 I think—when we were introduced and the first thing he said was 'Not John—Jack, always Jack.' It was funny, because we never talked about films, just other things.

"Most directors... they have no imagination; they have a compulsion to show everything. Other things bother me, too. *The Getaway*, for instance. That film said that it is OK to rob, murder, maim and kill—after all, they got away and lived happily ever after. It was an Unmoral film.

"Films like *The French Connection*, *The Getaway*, and what you told me about *Frenzy*, they lack respect for the human

"...I used to love and trust Americans. I still love them, but I don't trust them anymore..."

Scott Eyman is a frequent *Take One* contributor who claims to live in Euclid, Ohio.

Scott Eyman Collection / F.P.S. Archives

Fritz Lang rehearses Glenn Ford and Jocelyn Brando for a scene of **The Big Heat**

condition. They are... what is the word...? dehumanizing. By the way, don't print any of that, at least for the time being; no director has the right to criticize another director's work.

"Films don't let the audience think anymore. In my film *M*, there is a scene where the man kills a little girl, but you don't see anything, all you see is her balloon floating away. Now, he could have done many things to her, all of which you could nowadays show. He could have slit her open and put his hand inside her, he could have fucked her in the mouth, anything. But by not showing what he did, by not even suggesting it, we let each man and woman in the audience make up his or her own mind. We let them participate in the film.

"In my opinion, there were only two directors in Hollywood who made films without regard to box-office success: Von Stroheim and myself."

He was not your average, benevolent Old Man. He was cantankerous, demanding and autocratic, and driving a car with him giving incessant back-seat instructions was a harrowing experience that was bound to make you a Better Person.

Yet, he was sincerely interested in other people and once, when I was expunging the last vestiges of my liberal guilt by working in a juvenile penal institution, I found myself answering a long series of questions from him about criminal psychology.

Then there was his sense of humour, which often crossed over into the realm of the ridiculous. Picking up a check in a restaurant would result in him fixing you with a pitiable stare and a quavering "Why do you treat me like this?" The sudden summoning of this transparently phony, tottering apparition would invariably send me into choking laughter which he would meet with a private, amused smile.

His humanity, his feelings were revealed sparingly, suddenly, and the revelations came without warning, at odd, seemingly off-hand moments.

When I brought him a novelization in the original German of his wonderful 1928 thriller *Spies* (written by his then-wife Thea Von Harbou), he leafed through it, stopping to look at the stills that illustrated it, especially those of the leading lady, a Dietrich look-alike named Gerda Maurus. He closed the book, stared off into space in some private reverie, and then spoke.

"I was in love with her, with Gerda. But I was married at the time and I never did anything about it, never said anything to her. We would write occasionally—she lived in Switzerland. Finally, she got sick, and a friend of mine went to visit her. She told him, 'Tell Fritz that I loved him. Tell him that I would have followed him anywhere. All he would have had to do was ask. Tell him that I have always loved him.'

"She died. I have always been sorry that I never said anything, never did anything, for life is not so rich that one can ignore love, even once. So, my young friend, I thank you for this lovely gift, thank you with all my heart."

*****

Death, when it came for the Last of the Dinosaurs, took 10 months, and sitting in his garden towards the end, lost deep within himself in contemplation of a long journey into a forbidding country, he seemed to regard it with the bemused mixture of contempt and respect an old Austrian cavalry officer would have for an intransigent mount, one that, finally, could not be broken.

On my desk as I write this is his electric pencil sharpener, shaped like a slightly deflated football and still performing its function with alacrity and precision, still under the powerful spell of a man for whom exactitude was a way of life.

Yet, somehow more important, more reminiscent of the man, is a flower, also on my desk, that I took from his grave, on a gentle slope at Forest Lawn.

A simple flower, that most evanescent and poetic of all tangible objects, as Chaplin well knew.

Tangibles...

Before I met Fritz Lang, I thought that the concrete achievements of a man's life, objectively judged in a cold, determinist hindsight, were all that he could reasonably be judged by.

But remembrance has value of its own, and acts as an effective seasoning to the arid accumulation of hard data and the sometimes empty critical opinion of posterity; memory gives shadows and highlights, adds depth to the composition of a man's life, and gives off a sweet, lasting fragrance that never fades, never wilts, never dies—and thrives, not on water and soil, but on enduring imagination and lasting love.

As an artist, Fritz Lang was a Titan wrestling with the Gods; as a man, he hac the rare ability to both give and receive love.

This was the story I wanted to tell. ●

An interview with

ELLEN BURSTYN

By Ying Ying Wu

Ellen Burstyn first attracted attention on the screen for her engaging cameo role as Cybill Shepherd's mother in *The Last Picture Show*, and then later for her part in *The Exorcist*. She also appeared in *The King of Marvin Gardens* and *Harry and Tonto* and spent a year on Broadway in the smash comedy, *Same Time Next Year*.

She was in Paris last year working on Alain Resnais's latest film, *Providence*, being shot in English from an original screenplay by British playwright David Mercer (*Morgan, Family Life*), and also starring Dirk Bogarde, John Gielgud and David Warner. She plays Sonia, the wife of the barrister son of a celebrated writer at the end of his life, whose new novel, in which he passes final judgment on his family, invades his dreams one night. The next day the characters reveal themselves as different from his memory and imagination. Location shooting was completed in Belgium and Limoges, and the interior scenes were shot in the Paris studios of Joinville and Francoeur.

This interview was conducted in late June at Burstyn's hotel near the Champs-Elysées, where she was staying with her 14-year-old son, Jefferson. Burstyn was particularly eager to talk about what it's like for a woman working in the film industry today.

How did you get involved with the film, Providence?

Burstyn: In the case of *Providence*, they had specific people in mind to play the roles, and they developed the characters around the actors they wanted in the film. Alain Resnais had seen several of my films, and he felt that I would be right for this film. He came from Paris to New York and met me and told me that the script was being written. For the next few months, he screened all of his films for me. He sent all of David Mercer's plays and all of Mercer's articles, so I had a whole history of their careers. Then I read the script and went to London where I met with Mercer, and then I read a few more drafts before there was a completed script. As far as I know, they discussed the changes with all the actors. It was developed in the opposite direction that scripts usually are. Usually the script is completed and then they cast, but in this case, it was an interweaving of the script and the cast. The script was probably more developed in the first draft for the men's roles. Sonia, my character, was the least developed, so there was quite a change between the first and last drafts. I didn't really create anything because Mercer did all the writing, but just in discussing my feelings about the character, there were perhaps more objections to certain directions that were taken. Once the script is set, Alain makes his shooting script, then he doesn't make any

Ying Ying Wu is a Paris-based freelance writer.

more changes in the script. He likes to shoot what it says in the shooting script. Whatever thoughts anybody has about their character or their lines has to be said before they get to Alain's shooting script. He almost pre-edits the film. Alain doesn't shoot any extra footage, so that very often you don't play the whole scene.

Do you find that more difficult?

Burstyn: Not necessarily; there are just more things to remember. You have to keep more in your head. Which is quite a different way of working. For instance, in *Alice,* we went into rehearsal with the basic script, and then all of the actors worked very loosely in rehearsal and contributed whatever they wanted, and these things were made part of the script.

The shooting schedule has been less strenuous than you're used to.

Burstyn: Well, for one reason, I'm not in every scene so I have a lot of time. The French shooting schedule is very civilized; you don't have to get there before the sun comes up. It's noon to seven, which still allows you time to go out at night. When you're making a film in America, you can't do anything but go home. I'm writing a script in my free time. This is the first time I've ever been able to do a movie and do anything else at the same time.

What is the script you're writing?

Burstyn: It's a script for me to direct, not to act in. I'm working on it with a friend. Paramount told me that they wanted me to direct a picture, but I couldn't find anything already written that I wanted to direct. I set this in Detroit, which is where I'm from; it's an area of America that's never been used in films. The theme I'm dealing with, sexual repression and how it forms character and interrelationships, could be set almost anyplace in America, but I thought it would be nice to use a locale that's never been used and is very rich in local color and texture. It's the home of the automobile business, and that's another aspect of American life that hasn't been developed.

How far along are you into the script?

Burstyn: We now have all of the scenes, characters and events listed, and now we're getting down to writing. The film deals with two couples of two different generations and their interrelationship.

You're also producing several films.

Burstyn: It's not that I want to be a producer because I don't. I'm just producing movies for me to act in. It's to get the parts I want to play because nobody's writing them. It's no secret that the trend in Hollywood has been away from women. There just seems to be no apparent reason for it. Some people say that it's a reaction to the women's movement, that Hollywood's gotten very nervous about depicting women in stereotypes, and they're not quite sure what a woman is without being a stereotype, so they just shy away from everything.

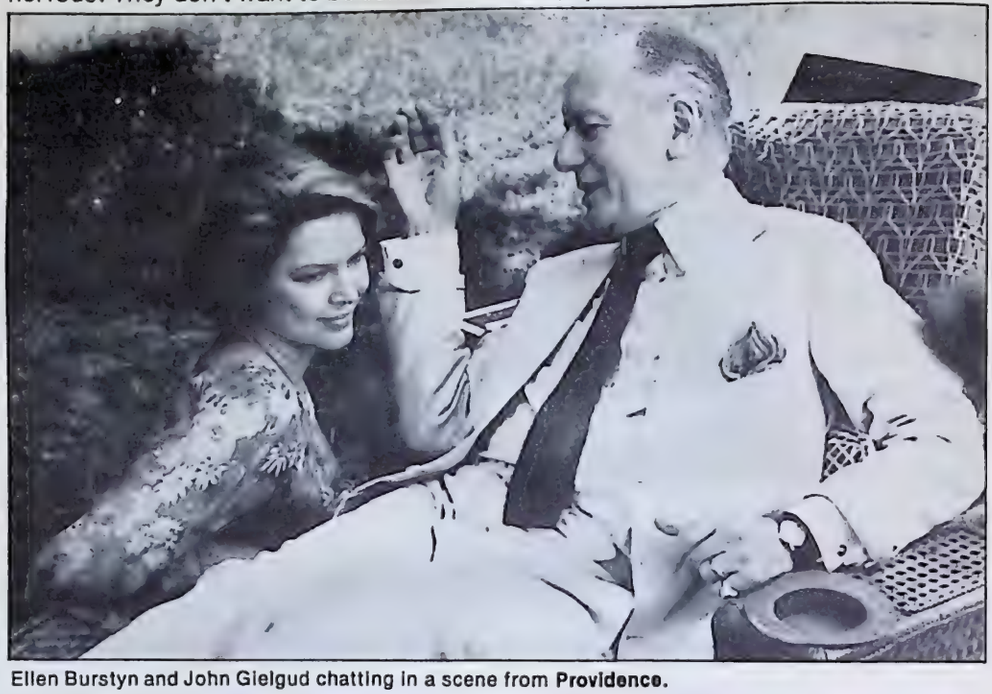
Also, a lot of screenwriters are men and they don't know how to deal with the women's movement.

Burstyn: Sure, for the most part, it's a fairly closed shop. There are probably more writers who are women than are directors and producers, and that's a beginning. But there's a tendency among some women writers to be a little nervous. They don't want to be considered a lady writer, so they end up writing westerns so they can just be considered a writer.

As in any discriminatory situation, you have to prove yourself to be better than average to get to the same place as the other people.

Burstyn: Exactly. And also to get in on their terms. That's gone on long enough. But just before I left for Europe, I went to California and found that the situation has changed. There's a project that I've been working on since 1972 when I was shooting *The Exorcist* that I've been trying to get money for, to get a writer for, and ever since then, I haven't been able to. Now suddenly, they're giving me the money for it. This project at Paramount is the life of Margaret Fuller, who was one of the leading intellectuals of America in the 19th century. She was the editor of Emerson and Thoreau, and the great-aunt of Buckminster Fuller. She wrote a book called *Women in the 19th Century,* which could have been written today. She also did things that no other women did at that time and some things that a lot of women would still be hesitant to do. It will be a sort of swashbuckler film like they made with Errol Flynn because she had that kind of life; she went to Rome and was involved in the Italian Revolution. She's been ignored by history because she was awfully intellectual for a woman. It wasn't that men were out to get women by any means, but the movement of culture just considered what men did more important than what women did. If a woman was intellectual, then she was a freak. It's time for her to be appreciated, because she was a terrific woman and a terrific American.

Another project at Universal is a film on women's participation in the Civil War. It's a biography about a woman who actually lived at that time, but it's also a look at war from a woman's point of view, up close. The third project is *Silence of the North,* a book by a woman who homesteaded in the north woods of Canada with her children during the Depression where she cleared the land, built the house, hunted, fished, trapped and brought up her kids alone. She's just a wonderful woman; I met her. That one I don't have to produce because Billy Friedkin (*The Exorcist*) asked to direct it, and Billy produces his own movies. This will be a sort of outdoor adventure film, woman against the elements. They're the kind of films that are not usually about women; the central character is usually a man. I'd just like to change the balance a little bit because I think women lead very exciting lives, and in literature and film they're always presented in a passive, feminine way. I'd like to reflect the way it really is, not the way we've been conditioned to think it is. My projects are an indication that the studios feel that they have been remiss and they have to make an effort now. I don't think a few years ago I could have gotten the money to develop a script for me to direct. It could only happen right now. It's like Nixon needed to be elected for there to be a cleansing of the institutions. We needed this period of desolation—of absolutely no films for women—for there to be this surge of energy.



Ellen Burstyn and John Gielgud chatting in a scene from **Providence.**

I was in Hollywood recently and learned that the American Film Institute is sponsoring a Women Directors Workshop.

Burstyn: I took part in that; the first thing I directed was at the AFI. I never would have learned to be a director if it hadn't been for that workshop, because it never occurred to me that I could be a

director.

Don't you think women are conditioned to thinking about themselves in a different way from men, which inhibits them from changing roles as easily?

Burstyn: Yes, can you picture a little girl saying, "I want to be a director when I grow up?" She can say she wants to be an actress, or even a writer or an airline stewardess, but directing just wouldn't occur to her because it's one of those jobs that girls don't think about. To break that conditioning, you really have to shake her up. Which was the whole point of the Directors Workshop. And it happened to all of us. All of the women who took part in the workshop were experienced, successful women in other fields, writers and editors, and it never occurred to any of us to direct. But the main experience for women is not the technical aspect. It's the idea that you can control the set, that you can have a comprehensive view, that you can be the one who holds the whole thing together. As soon as you break through your conditioning, you say, "Hey, what have I been doing all this time?"

On the other hand, it's a bit scary that you're responsible for everything.

Burstyn: But it's exciting as it is scary because it is so stimulating. It's so hard. I never did anything as difficult as directing that little 30-minute piece of film. By the time they showed it, I was standing in the back of the room just dissolved in tears because it was the release of all the emotion that I hadn't been allowed to feel during the course of directing that film. When you hold it all together, if the equipment breaks down, you don't scream, you say, "Fine, how soon can we have it fixed?" Holding the whole unit together was the hardest thing I've ever done. Women are just not conditioned to take full responsibility; we're assistants. To stop being an assistant is a very big, terrifying experience, but so invigorating. It really shoots you into a new level of being.

"To stop being an assistant is a very big, terrifying experience, but so invigorating. It really shoots you into a new level of being."

Burstyn looking anxious, in **Providence.**

Don't you feel that many films supposedly dealing with women's liberation portray women in a negative way? For example, in Alice, *I liked the way the character of Alice was developed and her problems were fully explored. But the ending where she goes off with the man disturbed me, because the solution seemed to be presented through the man. I felt that she should have gone off by herself to continue her career.*

Burstyn: That's the ending I wanted, but unfortunately the heads of the studios are men and they consider a happy ending that a woman gets married. There wasn't any other possible ending at the time. I think now that's made it possible for the next film where she does leave the man and goes out and leads her own life. However, there are a few clues in *Alice,* because although I was supposed to accept the fact that she would end up with David, I couldn't see how. Kris Kristofferson (who played David) came up with the line in rehearsal, "Okay, the hell with the farm, I'll take you to Monterey." That seemed to be a step, that the man wasn't going to make her give in, but that he would make the kind of sacrifice that women are always making for men. The next thing we did—this was Marty's [the director, Martin Scorsese] idea—was to have the whole cafe break into applause, which was our way of saying that this was the movie ending. This is not the way it is in real life, which was our clue if anybody wanted to pick it up. Then they lived happily ever after, this is the fairy tale ending. At that stage, we weren't at the point where the people in power were prepared to let her go off alone. But the fact of making the movie, even on their terms, then allowed for the next movie. Now I can direct a movie. So it was a stepping stone.

Do you live in Hollywood?

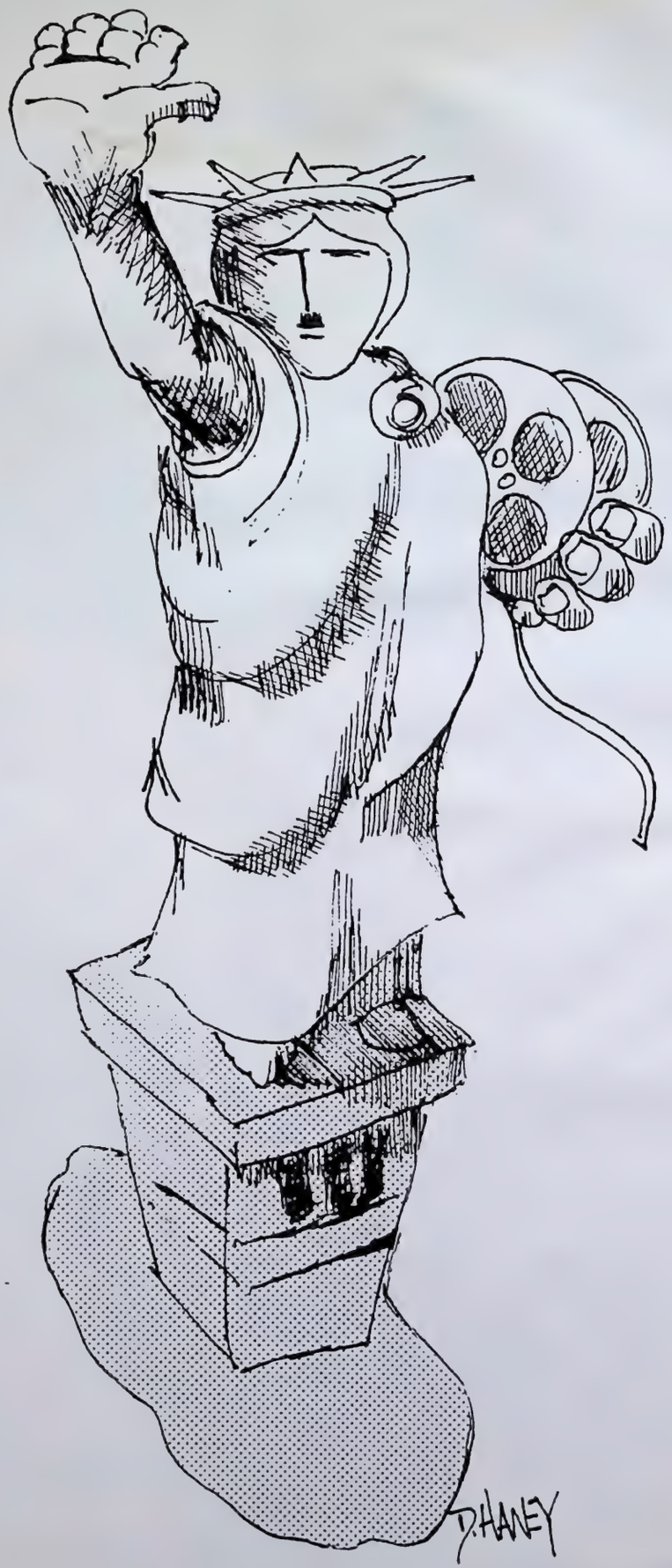
Burstyn: No, I have a nice house in the country outside of New York. I've lived in Hollywood, but Los Angeles has never seemed quite real to me.

If you live in Los Angeles and are involved in films, isn't your environment very limited?

Burstyn: Yes, it's a closed set. One reason why so few films are made about the rest of the country is that people in film think that everybody is as interested in their business as they—or rather we—are. It is an interesting business but there are richer things than glamour. I've never been able to take glamour seriously, anywhere, in fashion or the international jet set. In fact, in this film I met Yves St. Laurent, who did my clothes. It was a very educational experience for me, because I had tended to be prejudiced against designers and clothes and really not care about that. But in *Providence,* I play a woman who has a limited number of ways of expressing herself, and one of the ways is through her clothes. I've gotten into what it's about. Not everybody can be an actress or a painter, and there is still the impulse to express your inner being. So it comes out in clothes in a valid way; it's not just being a peacock, which is the way I used to think of it. Then when I met Yves St. Laurent, I saw that he's an incredible artist and really a nice man. I just stood there as he created on me.

Are there any directors you would like to work with or any roles you would especially like to play?

Burstyn: I haven't worked with Francis Coppola and I would like to. I really like working with young directors like Marty, and with young writers too. It's very hard to keep up your energy after you become rich and famous and successful. Somebody like Bill Friedkin does because he's a maniac. I like going full steam ahead and not turning back and not resting on your laurels, which is one of the sad things that happens to all people, not just people in film. They get satisfied with themselves which means they don't keep growing. I was just thinking this morning, I feel ready for a new energy charge from some new acting experience. I'd like to study with Grotowski or take part in what Peter Brook's doing. ●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...n and Jim Purdy

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The extremism of these films could only be the product of that period when America hit rock bottom. In 1932, the year of *Gabriel*'s production, approximately fifteen million were out of work, while the lives of many millions more were dramatically shattered.

Meanwhile, the Hoover administration took little effective action to combat the breakdown or relieve the suffering. The President, a staunch believer in laissez-faire and the "old verities," insisted that the government could not interfere with private enterprise, and that federal relief would only sap the people of their morale. Many intelligent observers predicted there'd be a revolution, and Hoover's Secretary of War, Patrick J. Hurley, concentrated armed units around big cities in anticipation of Communist attacks. There was also the occasional call for dictatorship. *Vanity Fair* proclaimed "Appoint a dictator!", while Senator David A. Reed of Pennsylvania offered: "I do not often envy other countries their governments, but I say that if this country ever needed a Mussolini, it needs one now."

Thus the proto-fascist films did express feelings that were prevalent among a fairly substantial segment of the population. But aside from the same sense of near hysterical desperation, the studios completely distorted political reality by dramatizing it in terms of the Hollywood Formula's good-evil morality, whereby the Depression is not so much a socio-economic breakdown as a moral one. The gangster and shyster films of the period had already established that corrupt individuals are entirely to blame for America's woes. Mobsters have infiltrated the highest levels of power and are able to control the courts and buy off politicians. Honest officials are impotent, strangled by constitutional legalities that the racketeers and their mouthpieces easily circumvent.

By adhering to these simplistic plot conventions, the right-wing cycle carefully sets up the argument that to restore democracy you must move beyond it. Since the system is in the grip of all-powerful villains, you must go outside it to destroy them. Furthermore, their evil is so obvious that no court of law is required to determine their guilt, and no regard for civil rights should interfere with their destruction. And as the Depression worsened, so the movie villains' grip strengthened, and the means to destroy them became correspondingly more ominous.

The first films to propose extra-legal methods are fairly timid and vague, elaborating only briefly on the nature of vigilanteism, and emphasizing that it is purely a temporary measure to be used until the corruption is rooted out. MGM's *The Secret Six* and *Beast of the City* each establish that society is handcuffed by the gangster's ability to control the police force and the courts. In the former film, Scorpio (Wallace Beery) and his mouthpiece Newton (Lewis Stone) hold sway over an entire city. The honest police chief is frustrated at every turn in combatting the gang, until he is finally discharged by Scorpio's stooge mayor. Police inspector Jim Fitzpatrick (Walter Huston) in *Beast of the City* finds it impossible to fight corruption from within the system. He arrests gang kingpin Belmonte on a murder charge only to see the racketeer go free a few minutes later. For his zeal, Fitzpatrick is rebuked by his superiors and demoted.

Both men have no option but to move beyond legal niceties. The police chief relies on an extra-legal vigilante group of concerned and anonymous citizens, the "Secret Six." The film hints that the Six have vast power—to debar Newton from law practise, to deport many of the thugs and arrest others for income tax evasion. But the mysterious power of the Secret Six is not put to the final test, and we never see them actually bending the law. Instead, when the police arrive at the gang's headquarters, Newton simply opens fire rather than going to court where he's always come out on top. This permits the police to vanquish the gangsters in a standard shoot-out.

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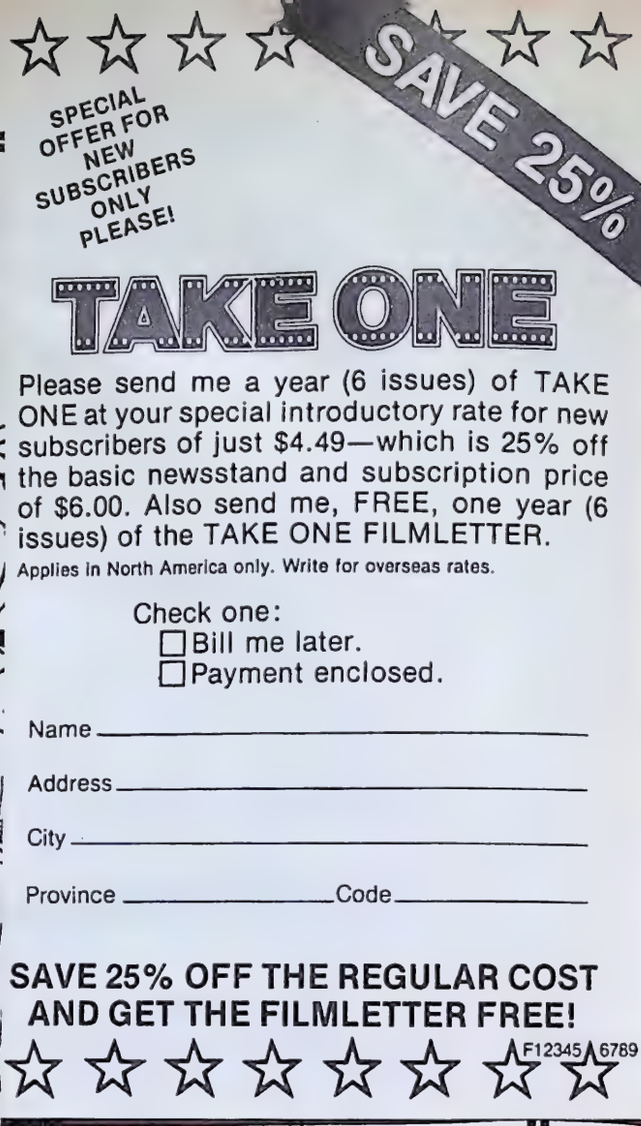
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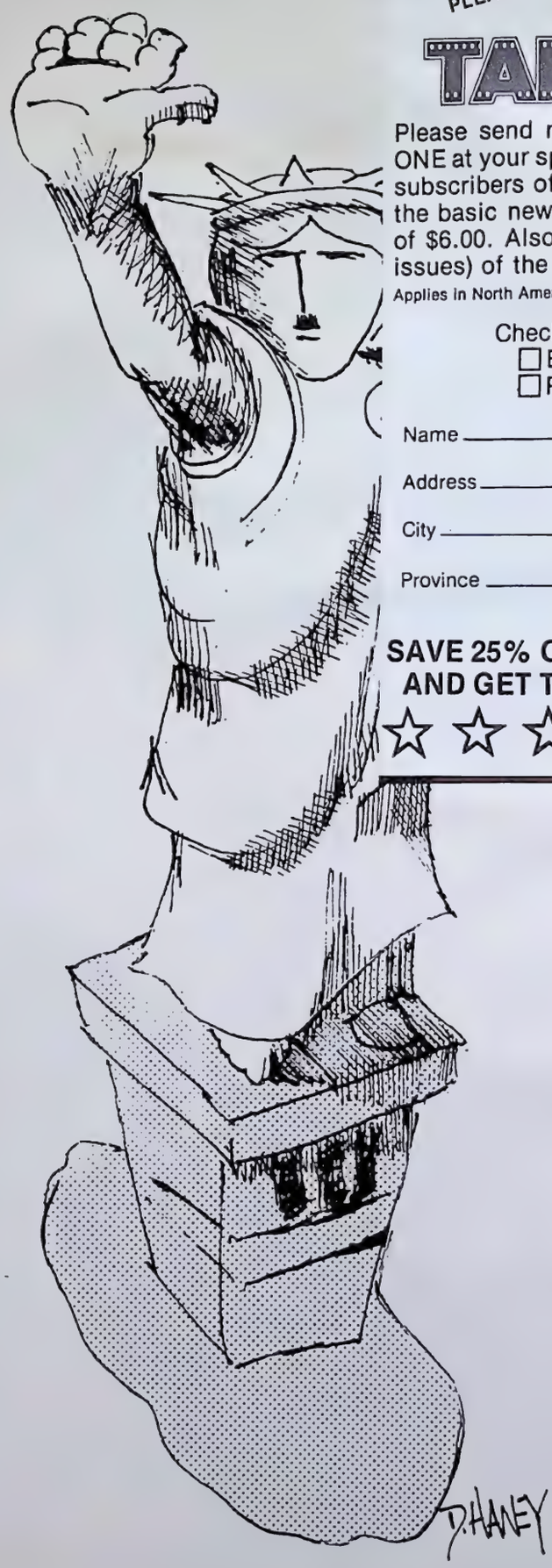
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HOLLYWOOD TURNS TO THE RIGHT

On those rare occasions when Hollywood did look for alternatives to the system, it readily turned to the right rather than the left for answers.

By Peter Roffman and Jim Purdy

Though the most renowned social problem films of the thirties are remembered as eloquent protests against social injustice (for example, *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang,* 1932, *Fury,* 1936, and *The Grapes of Wrath,* 1940), Hollywood was not always so liberal. The studios examined social issues (which they did more often than standard film history will admit) from a conservative point of view, celebrating the status quo's ability to confront and overcome problems that are not as severe as they initially seem. And on those rare occasions when Hollywood did look for alternatives to the system, it readily turned to the right rather than the left for answers.

The most extreme example of this right-wing orientation occurs in the proto-fascist cycle of 1931-1933, perhaps the most fascinating political films to come out of Hollywood during the Depression decade. Beginning with two crime melodramas, *The Secret Six* (1931) and *Beast of the City* (1932), which took a strong law and order stand, then moving into Cecil B. DeMille's glorification of vigilante action, *This Day and Age* (1933), the cycle culminated in William Randolph Hearst's *Gabriel Over the White House* (1933), which advocated dictatorial powers for the Presidency. Although not even *Gabriel* suggests fascism as a permanent alternative to American democracy, the films as a whole reveal a frightening willingness to place ends above means—even when those means include political murder—in order to find an immediate cure for the Depression.

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Gabriel Over the White House—M.O.M.A. Archives

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unconstitutional measures taken by its heroes. A group of idealistic high school students attempts to bring gangland murderer Louis Garrett (Charles Bickford) to justice by working through the judicial system, but discovers that the gangster controls the courts. Rather than just accept the defeatist attitudes of officials ("you see what we're up against"), the youths continue their campaign against Garrett, resorting to what are supposedly the only means left to them, mob action.

De Mille's glorification of the youths' vigilanteism is much more frightening than the previous films' guarded endorsements. The boys are considerably more vicious, kidnapping Garrett and slowly lowering him into a pit full of rats to force his confession. In their quest for direct, effective action, any tactic is acceptable. At the mock trial, their vigilante leader declares, "There is no time for rules of evidence. Besides, we want a conviction." To reinforce the validity of the boys' actions, DeMille has legitimate officials praise them. The police claim that the terrorist trial is "something too good to interrupt" and rather than stop it, they advise the "court" that any confession will be invalid unless signed before a judge. That very night the jubilant judge holds court while still in his pyjamas—direct action proves contagious. The DA gloats, "Well, your honour, it looks like the prosecution finally has a case."

Unlike the earlier films, *This Day and Age* hints that the extra-legal action should be something more than a temporary cure. The stress on the youths' sense of civic responsibility and on the school motto, "What you are to be you are now becoming," makes it clear that the boys' direct action is to be taken as an omen of a better future. When the judge's wife shrieks at the sight of the approaching army of torch-brandishing students "What is this, the revolution?", the answer, though unspoken, seems to be a hopeful yes.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the film is the obvious, though unconscious, parallel between DeMille's students and the Hitler youth. The imagery and symbolism of *Triumph of the Will* (1934), Leni Riefenstahl's colossal propaganda film of the Nuremberg rally released a year after *This Day and Age,* are bizarrely similar to DeMille's. Both films are infused with a chauvinistic superpatriotism. Just as Riefenstahl plays upon the invincibility of the Führer, the Party and the Fatherland, so DeMille glorifies God, motherhood and the American Way. Each director emphasizes mass action, the aura of ritual and celebration, fire and patriotic song.

The heaviest accent is on youth and how it represents the future. Both the German and American students are specimens of Aryan superiority—blonde, athletic, and brimming over with patriotic songs. They have banded together to serve one common purpose: to serve the Führer and the Fatherland; to bring Garrett to justice and see righteousness triumph. Although DeMille never actually advocates a police state or calls for a planned policy of political repression, it is not difficult to recognize the seeds of fascism in his reactionary fantasy.

Gabriel Over the White House, which extends the advocacy of lynch law to its logical conclusion, openly calling for an American dictatorship, must surely be the most bizarre political opus ever to come out of Hollywood. Produced for, and partially written by, powerful publisher William Randolph Hearst, the film combines practical recommendations for social and economic reform (Walter Lippman described the film as "a dramatization of Mr. Hearst's editorials") with a fascist fantasy wherein a President turns dictator upon a visitation from the Angel Gabriel. Using his heavenly power, the dictator not only puts an immediate end to the Depression, but also creates everlasting peace and prosperity for mankind. Even more outlandish than the fantasy itself though, is that Hearst, at the time an important supporter and advisor to Roosevelt, probably intended *Gabriel* as a blueprint for the incoming administration.

While it conforms in many ways to standard shyster melodrama, *Gabriel* provides a deeper insight into the desperation and suffering of the populace. Early in the film, audience indignation is aroused by an impassioned reporter (Mischa Auer) who protests to an ineffectual President:

> "There is starvation and want everywhere, from coast to coast, from Canada to Mexico. Millions of dollars are poured into new battleships, farmers burn corn and wheat, food is thrown away into the sea while men and women are begging for bread. Millions are freezing without coats while cotton is rotting in the fields. Thousands are homeless and there are millions of vacant homes. There were over 5,000 gangland murders last year, yet there are only five gangsters in prison, and that for income tax violation. What does the new administration say to this? What answer, what depthless plan does the government have for this indictment, to this vale of misery and horror, of lost hope, of broken faith, of the collapse of American democracy?"

With the exception of the overstated stress on gangsterism, the speech is, for Hollywood, a remarkable cry of distress.

However, once the audience is angered over these issues, the film settles back to focus that anger on the standard causes. President Jud Hammond (Walter Huston) is initially a conventional shyster figure, responsible more to the corrupt party machine than to the voters. Like Hoover, he dismisses the crisis with absurdly optimistic statements: "I intend to carry the country from the depths of despondency to the unsullied and sunny heights of prosperity," and disclaims all responsibility by defining issues such as unemployment as "local problems." Whereas the reporter's speech hints at a broader social breakdown, a later speech by Bronson (David Landau), a spokesman for the unemployed, narrows the causes to individuals: "The men responsible for providing work have failed in their obligations." He similarly defines the solution in terms of a strong leader: "This country is sound. The right man in the White House can bring us out of despair and into prosperity again." To affect this solution, Hammond is reformed. Upon the visitation of the angel Gabriel, the ultimate *deus-ex-machina,* Jud the Shyster becomes Jud the Savior.

The film's increased sense of desperation requires correspondingly extreme measures. To solve the country's most pressing problems, Jud must discard the legislative process which, controlled by the shysters, only serves to retard action. When Jud's cabinet places party loyalty above their country, he

This Day and Age

fires them; when Congress refuses to immediately pass his reforms, Jud suspends it and declares martial law.

Like the DeMille film, *Gabriel* frames these acts in patriotic terms. Already backed by God, Jud justifies his dictatorship in terms of American history and institutions:

> "I believe in democracy as Washington and Jefferson believed in democracy. And if what I intend to do in the name of the people makes me a dictator, then it is a dictatorship based on Jefferson's definition of democracy: a government for the greatest good for the greatest number."

He further compares himself to Lincoln, America's mythic martyr-saviour, using the same quill with which Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation and keeping a bust of his hero in his office.

Once he has gotten rid of Congress and the cabinet, Jud is able to apply simple, straightforward solutions to the various issues raised in the reporter's speech. He goes to the camp of Bronson's unemployed veterans and with one speech, a sort of sermon on the mount, restores their confidence in America and resolves the unemployment problem. He forms an Army of Construction, enlisting the unemployed as "soldiers" to work under government pay. The increased flow of money from this program will presumably stimulate private industry, which will then reabsorb the workers.

Having resolved the country's economic difficulties, Jud moves to end crime. The film reasons (and not unjustly) that gangsters flourish because prohibition has allowed them to corner the liquor market. The answer: repeal prohibition and form federal outlets to control the distribution of alcohol. When bootlegger Nick Diamond (C. Walter Gordon) resists the government plan, Jud creates a gestapo-like federal police unit to wage war on this "enemy of the people." Armoured tanks blow up Diamond's headquarters, and he is brought before a military tribunal, and summarily executed by a firing squad. Thus, the legal system, like the government, is discarded in the name of democracy.

After curing all other domestic ills, Jud turns to the final and greatest issue. He gathers together representatives of all the major powers for a conference on his yacht, and insists that these powers pay back their debts from the last war. When the representatives protest that they don't have the money, Jud reminds them of how much they spend yearly on armaments. By threatening them with his superior military firepower, he forces them to stop rearming. The abolition of weaponry will not only prevent future wars, but will also give these countries sufficient funds to pay their debts, balance their budgets and bring back prosperity.

Still, despite Jud's more extreme measures, his dictatorship is intended as a temporary solution. As Bronson has stated, the country is basically sound. Having found a "final solution," Jud's earthly work is complete, and there is no longer any need for a dictator. He signs an international peace pact, the Washington Covenant, with Lincoln's quill and lapses into a coma. Like Jim Fitzpatrick and Lincoln (both previously portrayed by Huston), he dies a martyr for his country.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of This Day and Age is the obvious, though unconscious, parallel between DeMille's students and the Hitler youth.

One thing *Gabriel* makes clear is the reactionary implications of the Hollywood Formula. By adhering closely to its conventions, particularly the deification of the individual hero, and adapting them to political issues, the film creates an authoritarian vision. Jud Hammond, strong-willed and decisive, is like the lone western hero, single-handedly protecting his homestead and community, in this case the entire country, by whatever means necessary. Using martial law and an entire army and navy instead of a six-shooter, he faces down every possible evil in the world. But what appears as an often entertaining morality play in the Old West, amounts to a fantasy of American dictatorship when it occurs in contemporary Washington and is applied to social problems.

Gabriel's background is just as fascinating as its drama. It contains many references to the 1932 campaign and represents one of Hollywood's infrequent attempts, through its commercial releases, at direct political propaganda. Hearst had been instrumental in getting Roosevelt nominated at the Democratic convention, and then worked hard on his campaign. It is rumoured that Hearst actually wrote many of Roosevelt's speeches, and *Gabriel* seems a further attempt to shape FDR's policies. Carey Wilson, the film's writer, reports that Hearst rewrote many of Jud's speeches himself and, according to Bosley Crowther, the publisher wanted to release the film on inauguration day.

Roosevelt never adopted Hammond's radical means or "eye for an eye" directness, but there are still many similarities between FDR and his film model. *Gabriel*'s producer, Walter Wanger, proudly boasts that the policies of the reformed Jud "prophesied a lot of things that later happened during Roosevelt's first administration." Just as Jud took steps to involve the government directly in the running of the nation's economy, so did Roosevelt. Both men recognized the necessity of immediate action. In his inauguration speech, FDR called for "direct, vigorous action...discipline and direction under leadership." While he never went as far as declaring martial law, FDR did ask for "broad executive power to wage war against the emergency, as great as the power that would be given to me if we were in fact invaded by a foreign foe." Among the many parallel policies of Jud's "New Order" and Roosevelt's "New Deal" are the repeal of prohibition, the creation of a federal police force, and government sponsorship of building projects staffed by the unemployed (the WPA and the CCC).

Though Roosevelt never did become the dictator Hearst had depicted, he was the strong leader the country needed. He could neither solve all the problems in his "Hundred Days," nor satisfy his supporters on the far right, but he was able to create a renewed sense of hope. There is no denying that by 1934-35 such extremists as Huey Long and Father Coughlin had deserted FDR and built up substantial followings, but the majority of Hollywood's audience still believed in the President and the system. For most people, FDR had made the move beyond the law suggested by the right-wing cycle unnecessary.

Gabriel Over the White House was the climax of the series. The cycle's next (and last) chief executive, President Stanley (Arthur Byron) of *The President Vanishes* (1934), resorted to

Gabriel Over the White House—M.O.M.A. Archives

much less drastic measures. Indeed, President Stanley takes his extra-constitutional actions in order to combat a threat from the right. The country is in the grips of a powerful shyster cabal of big businessmen and politicians who have allied with a fascistic people's movement, the Grey Shirts, led by would-be dictator Lincoln Lee (Edward Ellis). Tellingly, their nefarious plot is no longer connected to the Depression, but to getting America profitably involved in a European war. Through a massive publicity campaign to "Save America's Honor" and the Grey Shirts' violent repression of any opposition, the shysters arouse the populace into a pro-war hysteria. With Congress and the country lined up against him, Stanley makes a reluctant move outside the system in order to avoid war. It's the same old problem: "What chance has the President got against these high-priced racketeers?"

Unlike Jud Hammond, Stanley never exercises dictatorial powers nor gets back to first principles. Rather, he devises a dramatic and effective publicity stunt meant to "bring the people back to their senses." To arouse public sympathy for himself and his cause, he stages his own kidnapping on the day that Congress is to declare war. The public, apparently able to concentrate on only one big thing at a time, becomes too busy worrying about the President's safety to think about war. Their mood swayed with incredible ease, they now pray for the return of the leader they were about to reject: "He preached the precious gospel of peace. In our frenzied greed we struck him down. Oh God, restore him to us so that he may lead us in the paths of righteousness." Just as the "War Gods" are about to install their own puppet in the President's office, President Stanley makes a dramatic reappearance. He arranges to have himself discovered in the Grey Shirt's headquarters, thereby discrediting the Grey Shirts, their bosses and the pro-war movement. The best showman is once more triumphant.

Through its condemnation of the Grey Shirts and their anti-democratic leaders, the film assumes the guise of an anti-fascist film. But its method of combatting fascism, and its contemptuous portrait of a submissive public, have deeply reactionary overtones. Because the masses are completely dependent on authority figures, first following the malevolent powers towards war and then listening to the benevolent President's plea for peace, the democratic process appears irrelevant. The President manipulates the people as much as his enemies do through a ruse that is not only deceitful, but also illegal. The film excuses his refusal to use the constitutional forums of debate by showing these forums to be bankrupt. When the democratic process fails, he simply takes matters into his own hands. As William Troy of *The Nation* perceptively commented:

> "Lincoln Lee and his Grey Shirts are represented as criminal fanatics for no other reason than their excessive patriotism. But why is not the President subject to the same charge? Or, to put the question in a more disconcerting form, when is fascism criminal, and when is it American?"

But Stanley's actions are a far cry from Jud Hammond's gestapo. That *The President Vanishes* sidesteps the Depression

Roosevelt never adopted Hammond's radical means or "eye for an eye" directness, but there are still many similarities between FDR and his film model.

issues so central to *Gabriel* suggests that FDR had placated the insecurities of the earlier audience. The issues of American involvement in a European war, and of fascist insurgence at home, represent more an outside threat to a basically sound system than a questioning of problems within the system. Also, whereas *Gabriel* had presented a figure for FDR to emulate, *The President Vanishes* is already emulating FDR. (Like *Gabriel*, the film was produced by the staunchly Democratic Walter Wanger.) President Stanley begins a crucial radio speech to the nation with a Rooseveltian "My friends." When he tells the people "Tomorrow I go to Congress on your behalf," one is immediately reminded of the inaugural speech and the succeeding Hundred Days. To make sure that we draw the parallel, the screenwriters, Cedric Worth and Carey Wilson (of *Gabriel*), have one of the villains sarcastically refer to President Stanley's combative actions: "Well boys, how do you like the new deal?"

Though native fascism was on the rise throughout the mid-Thirties, *The President Vanishes* was the last major Hollywood film to suggest a move beyond the constitution. The next films to deal with the right wing elaborated on *The President Vanishes'* poorly developed anti-fascism and instead of seeking alternatives to the system, these films showed the system defending itself against those alternatives.

None of the right-wing films really suggest a shake-up of society's basic power structure. Rather they advocate temporary, albeit extreme measures to restore American capitalism to its former glory. The studios were closely linked to the financial establishment, and they therefore resisted any change that would threaten their status. It is perfectly natural then that the filmmakers who glorified the right should try to discredit the left and discourage any revolutionary alternative.

The films of the early thirties consistently implied that communism was an un-American evil that would destroy rather than save the nation, an addition to and not a cure for Depression woes. But the films never really discussed what communism actually is, instead basing their attack on caricatures of the evil Communists. Not wanting to lend too much credence to "the enemy," the filmmakers made the "reds" peripheral, unimportant characters who popped up from time to time to stir up trouble. These villains often spoke with Russian accents, disparagingly comparing America to "their country" and generally embodying characteristics of cowardice, intellectualism, and insincerity. By dismissing social unrest as the product of these foreigners rather than as a natural outgrowth of social breakdown, Hollywood hoped to immunize all the potential 'dupes' in the audience.

One common stereotype depicted Communists as hypocrites who turned to the cause only to conceal their sense of personal failure. Typical is Max (Robert Barrat) in *Heroes For Sale* (1933), an eccentric European intellectual whose rabid denunciations of the wealthy class are judged as little more than an excuse for his frustrations as an unsuccessful inventor. When one of his inventions does make him a wealthy man, Max stops denouncing the capitalist swine, and turns against those he

Because the masses are completely dependent on authority figures, first following the malevolent powers towards war and then listening to the benevolent President's plea for peace, the democratic process appears irrelevant.

The President Vanishes—M.O.M.A. Archives

once termed the downtrodden slaves.

Another movie red was the agitator, an uncouth, unshaven sloppily-dressed rabble-rouser who fomented strikes and riots either for his own gain or out of sheer personal malevolence. The railway strikers in *The Power and the Glory* (1933) are led by a slob who, in a heavy Russian accent, claims that if given the chance, he would punch rail magnate Tom Garner (Spencer Tracy) in the face. But when Tom arrives on the scene and grants the troublemaker his chance, the man cowers into the background, exposed as a cowardly fraud who is no match for the American individualist. In *Little Man, What Now?* (1934), a proletariat figure (Fred Kohler) keeps showing up to exhort the unemployed, frustrated hero to take to the streets in protest. This leftist, however, only contributes to the hero's rejection of radicalism. The man is nothing more than a bully who is rude and ungrateful when fed by the sympathetic heroine (Margaret Sullivan), and who helps cause his own wife's death by refusing to take her to a "boorgwas" doctor.

Whenever the crowd is swayed by these reprehensible types, disaster follows. The central message of the agitator films is that revolution never helps the people, and only causes greater tragedy. The strike in *The Power and the Glory* leads to violence and a disastrous fire which kills hundreds of strikers. In *Heroes for Sale*, workers fired because of Max's time-saving invention ignore hero Tom Holmes' (Richard Barthelmass) pleas for moderation, and riot. As Tom predicts, defiance is futile and disastrous. The police intervene to prevent the workers from destroying the machinery and a number of people, including Tom's wife, are killed.

On the other hand, Hans (Douglas Montgomery), the protagonist of *Little Man, What Now?*, rejects the rebels as "street rabble," claiming that he is satisfied and knows his place. Even after he's deprived of that place, he resists the activist alternative, feeling more a sense of personal failure than of social indignation. In the end, beaten by the police in a demonstration and thrown into the gutter, Hans spontaneously grabs at a rock to retaliate. Suddenly "coming to his senses," he is shocked and sickened by his actions, utterly disgraced at becoming one of "them." But his forbearance pays off. For not throwing the rock, the film immediately rewards him with a son and a good job. Because he rejects revolution, he averts personal tragedy.

Although this central theme of anti-communism would continue almost unbroken (except briefly during World War II) for forty years, there were at least two exceptions in the early thirties. In filming Elmer Rice's popular and prestigious plays, *Street Scene* (1931) and *Counsellor-at-Law* (1933), Hollywood faithfully translated the playwright's less biased views on communism. In *Street Scene* Rice criticizes the narrow-minded dogmatism of the Party through the character of Abe Kaplan (Max Montor). But at the same time, Abe is a human being rather than a caricature; his communism a logical outgrowth of poverty and his narrow-mindedness parallel to the stifling environment of the slums. More surprising though, is the Communist in *Counsellor-at-Law*. In this later work, the Communist is a young idealist, and although he appears only briefly, is one of the few uncompromised characters in the film. The youth has been beaten up by the police in a street rally and then charged with sedition. His old immigrant mother brings him to the office of their one-time ghetto neighbour, George Simon (John Barrymore), now a big shyster lawyer. The lawyer chastises the young radical, attacking his foolish notions of changing the world. Simon offers his own career as proof that success and fulfillment are open to all men. But the youth will not be placated. Standing over Simon, the Communist angrily castigates him and everything he represents. Suddenly submissive, Simon cannot answer and there is no doubt that the Communist is meant as an heroic figure. This powerful moment is his only appearance in the film. Later we hear that he has been killed, and again Simon hesitates, momentarily touched by the ideals and truth the boy stood for.

Since Rice's plays were already proven works, the studios were very reluctant to tamper with any of them, even if they strayed from the political norm. Better to risk a little political controversy than upset the elements of popular success. Of course Abe and the youth are only minor characters and hardly constitute an antidote to Hollywood's more typical anti-red bigotry.

No discussion of Hollywood anti-communism would be complete without mention of the role the studios played in the 1934 California gubernatorial contest. In their attempt to quash the candidacy of Democrat Upton Sinclair, the producers utilized the anti-red stereotypes of their feature films with great success. At the time the studios began their smear tactics, Sinclair was apparently winning over many Californians with his quasi-socialistic EPIC (End Poverty in California) plan, a radical program whereby the government would take over idle factories and land for use by the unemployed. Visions of cooperative communities and production-for-use economy excited Sinclair followers, while visions of lazy tramps arriving en masse to live in the golden sun of Southern California incensed the propertied class. A huge public relations campaign was mounted to defeat Sinclair. Louis B. Mayer, a chieftain of California's Republicans, organized the film industry. The producers pooled their resources, raised one and a half million dollars (partially by assessing salaries of stars and directors), and made a series of fake newsreels. Hollywood bit players appeared as gentle old ladies, rocking on their front porches and declaring themselves for Republican candidate Frank Merriam: "Because I want to save my little home. It's all I have left in the world." Others played the bearded rabble who intend to vote for "Seenclair": "Vell, his system worked vell in Russia, vy can't it work here?" The *Hollywood Reporter* boasted in September: "The campaign against Upton Sinclair has been DYNAMITE. It is the most effective piece of humdingery that has ever been effected." Sinclair's campaign fell apart and he lost by an overwhelming 250,000 votes. The election provided Hollywood with the opportunity to directly influence actual politics—not only to fabricate fantasies on the screen, but to extend them into the real world. Their success is a barometer of both the public's fears and of the impact of repeated stereotyping by the mass media. ●

FUNNY MAN
AN INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE BURNS

By Albert Nussbaum

George Burns was born Nathan Birnbaum in New York City on January 20th, 1896. He got his first taste of show-biz at seven, when he sang tenor with a group called "The Pee Wee Quartette." He has been going strong and picking up momentum ever since.

His partnership with Gracie Allen was successful both on- and off-stage. Of all the great mixed acts of vaudeville, theirs was the only one that survived through radio, motion pictures, and television. They once received 360,000 fan letters in a period of four days. Burns called his 1955 biography *I Love Her, That's Why,* and they were together until her death in 1964.

Burns, like all the greats, has been able to survive changing styles and times while others—Red Buttons, for instance—are consigned to the oblivion of "Red who?" When his long-time friend Jack Benny died suddenly, Burns was asked to take over the role Benny was to have played in *The Sunshine Boys.* And, although Burns had had open heart surgery a short five months before, he had no trouble getting past the doctors for the company insuring the film. Awarding the Oscar to Burns for this 1975 role was among the most popular and least disputed decisions in the history of the Academy Awards.

At eighty, George Burns is as quick and vital as men a fraction of his age. He replied to my questions without hesitation. In fact, he sometimes started his answer before the entire question was out. As a result, what began as an interview ended as a conversation.

Though I often asked for feelings, I seldom got them. Burns isn't the type who bares his soul or loses control of even the most spontaneous interview. Burns knows who he is, where he is, and that it is a very serious thing to be a funny man.

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A recent NBC Special on the history of comedy seemed to assume that humour has become better. Is this the way it seems to you?

Burns: Has become better?

Has become better. They seemed to think that the humour is funnier and—

Burns: I think humour is stronger today. I think it's better too. Of course, I'm not talking about jokes now. I'm just talking about humour—you know, the things that you practically ad-lib. Your ad-libs are funnier.

I think with television people get to be sharper. Everybody who owns a television today owns a theater. They know everything. My cook came in the other day, Arlette; I forgot what show she was talking about, but she said, "She didn't look good; the lighting was bad." One day she came in and said, "She's a very pretty girl. They should have had a close-up of her." Things like that from a lady who makes hot soup for a living.

Though you began in vaudeville, there's nothing exaggerated about you. Your delivery is nicely understated. Do you owe your economy of movement and gesture to radio where you didn't have visuals to depend upon or how do you think you developed it?

Burns: Well... I really developed it by doing nothing. You see, I don't sweat on the stage. I work very easy. And I got a great start in show business because I never did have to sweat because I was always very bad. If you're a good actor and you're not doing well, you start to have a flop sweat. But I was a bad actor—there was no sense in me sweating. The audience used to sweat! So, when Gracie and I started moving in the right direction, I never had to sweat because Gracie was always great. And eventually when I started working by myself, I kept the same thing.

How long did it take you to become an overnight sensation—the first time?

Burns: Well, I never—we never were an overnight sensation, Gracie and myself. We made it gradually. We were a good man-and-woman act, but we were not headliners or stars or featured attractions. We were on the bill with them. There would be a star or two stars and a featured attraction, and then we would come—fourth billing in an eight-act show.

And then one day Fred Allen got sick. He was supposed to make a short for Paramount over on Long Island, and we took his place. They told us the night before that we were going to make this thing. We had to talk for nine minutes and get seventeen hundred dollars. We never heard of seventeen hundred dollars in our lives.

When we got to the set, Gracie looked into cigar boxes and under the sofa. I said, "What are you looking for?" She said, "The audience." I said, "The camera there—that lens that's sticking out. If you look into that lens, *that's* the audience." She said, "Oh!" And I said, "If we can talk for nine minutes, we're gonna get seventeen hundred dollars. Do you think you can talk for nine minutes?" She said, "Just ask me how my brother Willie is." I said, "How's your brother Willie?" and she talked for nine minutes. And when the nine minutes were up, I stopped her from telling a joke, and I looked into the camera and said, "Ladies and Gentlemen, our nine minutes are up, and we just made seventeen hundred dollars. Gracie, say goodbye." And she waved into the camera.

And that short—by accident—turned out to be a smash, and that started us moving in the right direction.

How competitive are comedians? Is the joke stealing we hear about really the comedian or—

Burns: In the days when I first started, if you had seventeen minutes it was like your life savings. Because if you had seventeen good minutes in vaudeville, you could play for seven, eight, or ten years without changing a joke. You didn't allow anybody to steal a joke.

There was an office called the Pat Casey Office. When you had seventeen minutes, you'd write it down and send it to Pat Casey. And the letter would be closed. If Crovney and Brown stole some of our jokes, I'd write to Pat Casey and say Crovney and Brown are doing the pineapple joke. He'd look in the file and notice that the pineapple joke belonged to us, so he'd call up Crovney and Brown and say "Out!" And if they didn't take it out, they wouldn't work. See?

Nowadays with television it's entirely different. If they don't steal your jokes, you fire your writers! That's the only way you know you have good jokes. But the writers are better today than they were then. Aaron Hoffman was considered the great writer. It would take Aaron Hoffman sometimes a year to write a sketch and that sketch would work for ten years and he got ten percent commission. Today you sit down and kick ideas around and

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Albert Nussbaum, a frequent contributor, formerly of the federal penal institution in Marion Illinois, is on the loose. He is a successful freelance journalist and TV script-writer, now living in Hollywood.

**"...I was a bad actor—
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sense in me sweating.
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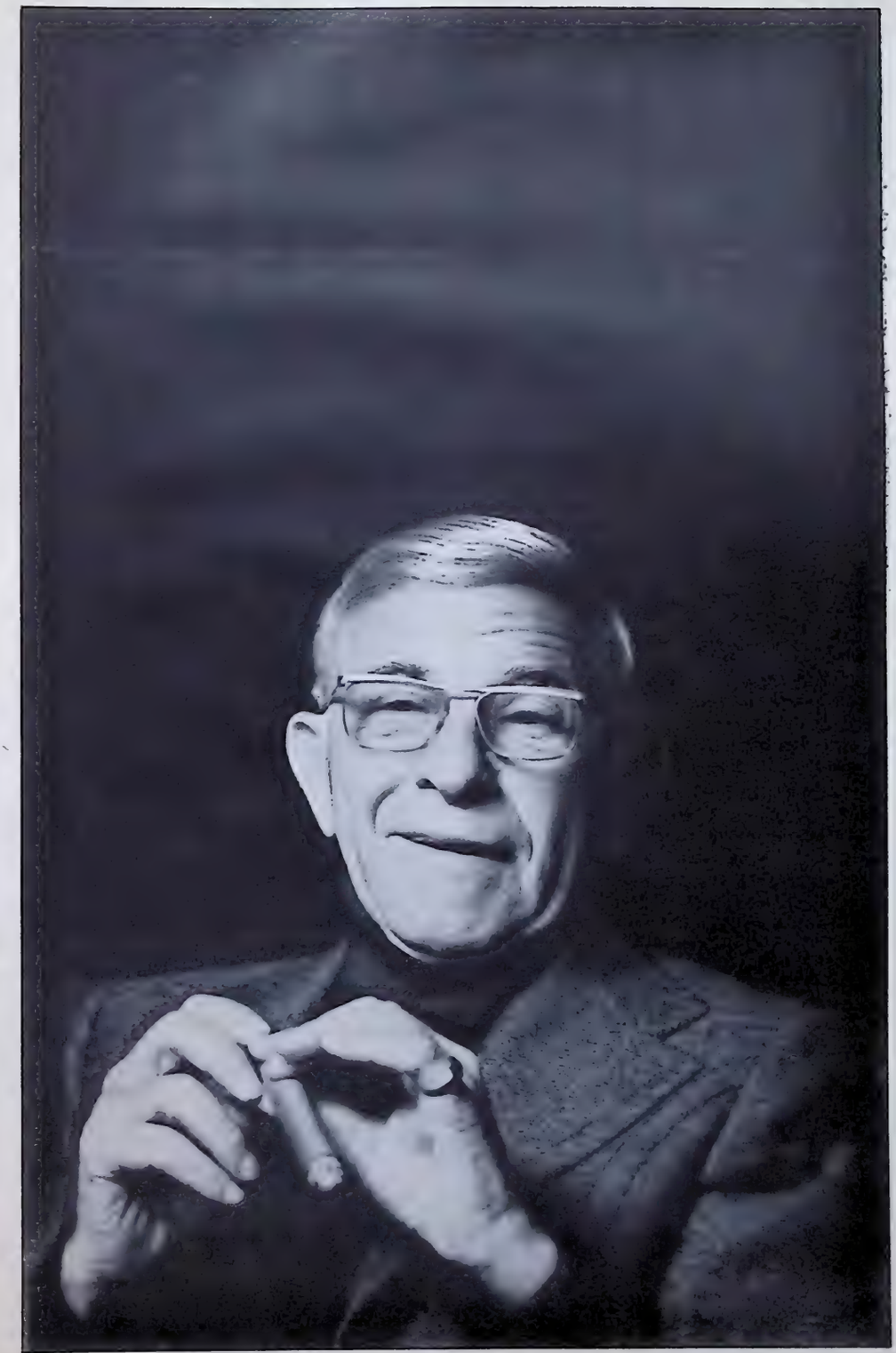

write it by the yard.

I used to have five writers on "The Burns and Allen Show." Let's say one of the writers would bring in four-five pages that I didn't like. I'd say, "I don't like 'em," and he'd go into the other room; put a paper in the typewriter. It would've taken Aaron Hoffman seven-eight months to do what he did in an hour. But he had to; necessity does that.

The next question was going to be, how dependent are you on writers and—

Burns: I've always believed in writers, although I'm a writer myself. I don't put paper into the typewriter and write it that way, but I know funny things, and I say funny things, and I've a good ear. I'm very good in a room with writers and I know what's right for me.

Tell you a story I think might be interesting: I used to have five writers, six writers, and every writer would bring in his own stuff. Eventually, we didn't do that anymore—eventually, we didn't bring in anything. We started from scratch in the room. But when they used to bring everything in, each one would read his own material, and the writer who had the best delivery, I'd use his stuff. There'd be some writers who brought in great stuff, but they had lousy deliveries. Like one writer stuttered—I *never* used his stuff!

So I finally said, "Wait a minute!" and I got Jack Langdon, who is my secretary, to read everybody's material. So I had the same delivery reading everybody's stuff and I could judge it that way.

There's often one word that can be used to describe a comedian. Hope might be called brash, Benny was thought of as tight, Groucho as lecherous. What one word do you think best describes your on-stage personality?

Burns: Easy. Relaxed. Like I'm not getting paid, I guess. I do it like I'm not getting paid, or I try to make it seem that way.

The new breed of comedians all seem pretty much alike. Is that the way it seems to you? Or is it that just the distinct personalities, the Hopes, the Bennys, the Grouchos—

Burns: I haven't seen them all, but the thing now is that comedy is sort of open. They can say anything. They use any word they want to use. And I think who really started that was Buddy Hackett. You see, there are some comedians who can do it

and get away with it, then there are others who can't. You've got to be a very, very good comedian to be able to get up there and say all those four-letter words and make it sound natural. And Buddy Hackett is just the greatest at it.

He's such a big hit that all the comedians in Vegas figured, "Well, if he can do it with his pants down, so can I." But they can't. So you've got all these comedians doing all these four-letter jokes which I don't do.

But, look—I'm not knocking it. If they can make a living that way... I must tell you one story: There was a guy on the air who was giving an imitation of me, selling something, and my lawyer called up and said, "There's a fellow on the air, using your voice, and using a cigar, and he's selling a product. Do you want me to stop him?" I said, "Of course not. Let him make a living. It could be worse—*I* could be doing *him*." It's the same thing with those comedians—let 'em do what they want just so long as I don't have to be them. I'm myself.

Your role in The Sunshine Boys *has been described as your first part not playing yourself. Do you go along with that? Henry Fonda has been quoted as saying, "To this day I die inside, making personal appearances without a character to hide behind."*

Burns: I think movies *are* easier. You have help on the stage when you're doing a movie or you're doing a show. You can talk to someone; and if the audience doesn't like you, you don't have to look at them. You can look at the guy you're talking to. But when you're standing out there all alone, facing an audience, if they don't like you, you're in trouble. There's no other place to look. And there's nobody else you can talk to. You have to talk to them.

Doing *The Sunshine Boys* I had Walter Matthau and Dick Benjamin, two great actors. How can you go wrong with guys like that? And, besides, what's tough about a guy saying, "How do you feel?" and you say, "Fine." That's good acting.

Maybe... if you don't *feel fine.*

Burns: Then say you don't feel fine. He says, "How do you feel," and you say, "Lousy." That's also good acting. But if he says, "How do you feel?" and you say, "Look on the floor—maybe it fell down," that's bad acting. That means you're not listening.

What do you feel you get out of your performances?

Burns: First of all, it's a joy to entertain people. That's number one. And I *do* get paid. That's number two. And at my age to get out there and smoke a cigar and sing some songs and tell some stories is great. It gets me out of bed. That's important when you get to be my age, because bed can get to be very comfortable.

What kind of people make you laugh? Not necessarily actors or comedians.

Burns: What makes me laugh...? I'm not a big laugher. I appreciate funny things and I like lines. Things like, oh... When we had the atomic bomb and the Russians didn't, or we thought they didn't, Georgie Jessel said, "Don't be silly. Just because the Russians dance sitting down doesn't mean they don't have the atomic bomb." To me that's terribly funny. That's the kind of thing that cracks me up.

I laugh at spontaneous things. If you say, "Here's a funny joke," you're cooked. Then I know you want me to laugh, and if you want me to laugh, I can't do it. If you tell me something funny that happened, then I'll laugh; but if you say, "This is a very funny joke," then I want to get paid for laughing.

What kind of tricks do you have? Singers all have their own little tricks to prepare the audience, but what kind of set-ups do you have to get your audience right?

Burns: I have no set-up. I just come out, say hello, and do what sometimes is a funny opening line. For instance, I open in England next week and I understand Lord Laurence Olivier is going to introduce me. That calls for a line, so my opening line will be, "Isn't it exciting? Imagine, Lord Laurence Olivier coming all the way to England to introduce me." And then my next line is, "I guess Sir Danny Kaye couldn't make it."

I have no set routine. I heard that Olivier was introducing me, so we sat around and thought of that line. From then on I just keep talking and keep singing and keep going.

What do you feel the audience expects from you? Is it just a few laughs, or is it more than that? How do you see your role?

Burns: Well, they come in to be entertained. They come to hear a raconteur. I tell things that happened during my life—I don't tell any jokes. Everything is basically true that I tell in the act. Of course, it's exaggerated and augmented to make it funnier, but everything I talk about has happened to me.

A comedian is better off with my kind of thing than with telling jokes, because people remember jokes, but they don't remember what I'm doing. An anecdote runs sometimes four or five minutes. Who can remember four or five minutes? But if you get up and tell a story about two guys in a saloon, drinking together, *that* the audience will remember. So you can't use that very long. Especially if it's a great joke. It's always the biggest laugh in your act that you have to take out if you're doing jokes.

When Gracie and I were doing an act some years ago, we had one little routine where she said, "I'm glad I'm dizzy. Boys like dizzy girls," or whatever the joke was. We changed our whole act, but we didn't change that. We were getting about $350 a week and wanted a $25 raise. I told the guy we're doing a new act, and he said, "No, you're not. You're still doing 'I'm glad I'm dizzy. Boys like dizzy girls.' " That's all he remembered, and the whole act was new. So the following week I took out "I'm glad I'm dizzy," put in some lousy joke, and got a $25 raise.

Now that we have entertainers with names like Rodney Dangerfield and Engelbert Humperdinck, do you ever wish that Nathan Birnbaum had become famous?

Burns: No. That would be a good name for a violinist. Then I would even change it to Nathaniel.

Do you think "The Burns and Allen Show" would be in trouble today if it was a new show, not on reruns? I mean, considering women's lib and everything.

Burns: No, I think people would still be entertained. You couldn't afford those shows today. Don't forget, on those shows we had Bea Benaderet, who was a star on her own; we had Larry Keating, who was great; Harry Von Zell and myself. And every week we'd bring in a new little actress, like Suzanne Pleshette would be on one week, Mary Tyler Moore would be on one week—she was then about 18 years old. You couldn't afford those shows today. We brought in very good people. And the shows stood up over the years because we didn't peddle jokes, we peddled the situation.

I liked the way you'd come out of the scene for your monologue. I used to look forward to it.

Burns: I could do that because we were Burns and Allen, living at home; we were a vaudeville act, living at home. Our business was show business.

When making The Sunshine Boys, *which was 36 years after your last film, did you notice any changes in the way things were done, the techniques, the attitudes, the atmosphere?*

Burns: Yeah, it's much more natural today. They don't use as many lights; they hardly use any lights. They used ceilings. When I was making movies with Gracie, they had lights up there. There were no ceilings. If we were doing a scene in this room, this would be the lighting. It would be as natural as this.

They use very, very little make-up. In the old days, everybody had Clara Bow lips, all the women, powdered and painted. They use almost nothing today. I had no make-up at all. They put on a lot of make-up to make you look bad, but not to make you look good.

You see, to make you look old, like Walter Matthau, who is 54 or something, and they had to make him look 73, *that* needs make-up; and even that is done very, very naturally. We had a great make-up man, Dick Smith who did the make-up for Cicely Tyson's role as a 110-year-old woman.

And the acting is very natural today, too.

One last question—do you have any particular ritual you go through before a performance, any show-biz superstition you follow, if only not to anger any strange gods?

Burns: Yes, I make sure my fly is closed. ●

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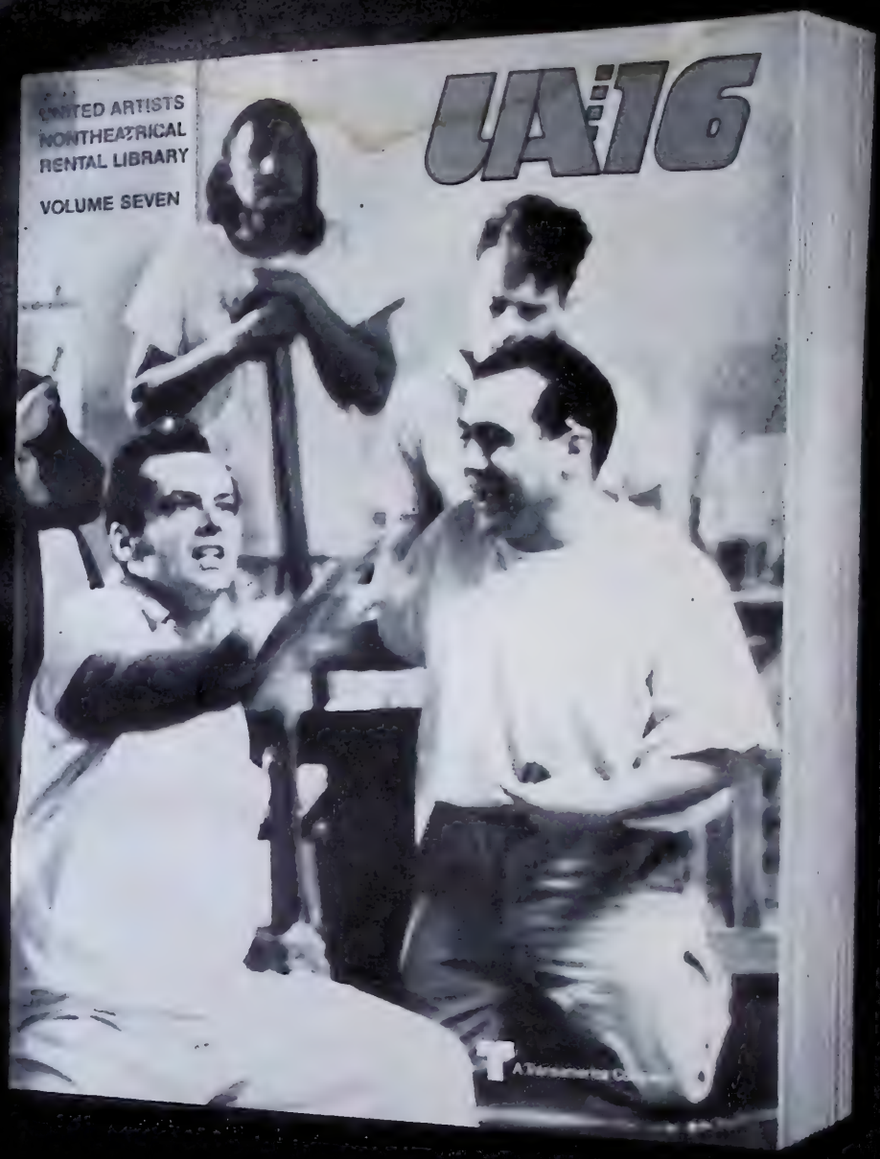

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Films on Film: A Checklist

Compiled by Judith Trojan

The following resource list of 16mm documentary, nontheatrical "films on/ about film" runs the gamut from cinema history and biography to on-location footage and tongue-in-cheek theoretical satire. These films—some classic, some new—are currently blossoming into an important tool for film study, supplementing feature film usage in the classroom and supplanting an excessive dependence on book study. The list is by no means a comprehensive one; it focuses on films that aim to enlighten, entertain, and educate in the history, aesthetics and personalities of world cinema; it does not touch upon those that discuss the abc's of creating award-winning scratch films on your dining room table. That I'm afraid, is another list... a long one.

Abel Gance: Yesterday and Tomorrow. 28 min., color/ b&w, 1962.
Director: Nelly Kaplan. Distributor: Bailey Films. The life, work and creative struggles of this innovative film pioneer. Includes clips from his extraordinary films.

Abel Gance: The Charm of Dynamite. 49 min., b&w, 1970.
Director: Kevin Brownlow for the BBC; Distributor: International Telefilm (Can). A biography of Gance which includes extensive footage from *J'Accuse, La Roue* and *Napoleon* as well as documentary footage of the making of the latter.

Animated Cartoons: The Toy That Grew Up. 17 min., b&w, 1947.
Director: Roger Leenhardt. Distributor: Film Images/ Radim Films. "Movies" before the turn of the century. Fine sequences on the images created by Plateau's Phénakisticope, Horner's Zootrope, and Reynaud's Praxinoscope Theatre.

Arthur Penn Films "Little Big Man." 30 min., color, 1970.
Director: Elliot Erwitt. Distributor: Time-Life Films. On-location with Penn and Dustin Hoffman.

Arthur Penn (1922-): Themes and Variants. 86 min., color, 1970.
Director: Robert P.S.B. Hughes. Distributor: Macmillan Audio Brandon (US), Marlin Motion Pictures (Can). Penn at home philosophizing, reviewing his career, and at work directing and editing. Includes thoughts about and from his stars: with film clips.

The Biography of the Motion Picture Camera. 21 min., b&w, 1947.
Director: Roger Leenhardt. Distributor: Film Images/ Radim Films. Introduction to the evolution of cameras and their images just prior to the turn of the century. Includes seminal work of Marrey, Muybridge, Edison, and the Lumière brothers.

Judith Trojan works for the Educational Film Library Association

The Birth of the Soviet Cinema. 49 min, b&w, 1972.
Writer/ Narrator: Richard Schickel, Distributor: Films for the Humanities (US) Marlin (Can). The work of Vertov, Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Dovzhenko in the twenties. Fine choice of film excerpts.

Buster Keaton Rides Again. 55½ min., b&w, 1965.
Distributor: John Spotton for the National Film Board of Canada; Distributor: McGraw-Hill Films (US) NFB (Can). Keaton at age 69 as he films his 87th movie, a Canadian comedy short.

Cinema. 3 min., color, 1972.
Director: Sebastian C. Schroeder. Distributor: Film Images/ Radim Films. Primitive "street cinema" in modern-day Kabul, Afghanistan.

The Cinema of Raymond Fark. 9 min., color, 1971.
Director: Bruce Beresford for the BFI. Distributor: Films Inc. (US), Visual Education Centre (Can). Semiology stripped bare! A take-off on theoretical mumbo jumbo.

The Critic. 4 min., color, 1963.
Director: Ernest Pintoff. Distributors: Learning Corp. of America (sale/ rental) & Macmillan Audio Brandon (rental) (US), Marlin (Can). Mel Brooks, in voice only, provides astute commentary on avant garde cinema.

D.W. Griffith: An American Genius. 55 min., color/ b&w, 1970.
Co-writer/ Narrator: Richard Schickel. Distributor: Killiam Shows. A biography with reminiscence from some who knew him. With film excerpts.

Dalton Trumbo. 10 min., b&w, 1971.
Producer: NET-TV. Distributor: Indiana University Audio-Visual Center (US), Canadian Film Institute (Can). The screenwriter discusses blacklisting and his decision to film *Johnny Got His Gun.*

David Lean: A Self-Portrait. 60 min., color/ b&w, 1971.
Director: Thomas Craven. Distributor: Pyramid Films (US), International Tele-Film Enterprises (Can). Lean recalls his career, stars, great moments, and films. With Robert Bolt, Sam Speigel, and film clips.

Days of Thrills and Laughter. 93 min., b&w, 1961.
Producer: Robert Youngson. Distributor: Carousel Films (sale); McGraw-Hill Films (rental) & Macmillan Audio-Brandon (rental). Clips from Hollywood's golden age of comedy, the 1920s.

Directed by John Ford. 102 min., color/ b&w, 1971.
Director: Peter Bogdanovich. Distributor: Films Inc. (US). Visual Education Centre (Can). Great coverage of Ford's career with focus on the films with John Wayne, Henry Fonda, and James Stewart, who, along with Ford, are on hand to reminisce. Narrated by Orson Welles.

Direction d'acteur de Jean Renoir. 23 min., color, 1971.
Director: Gisèle Braunberger. Distributor: McGraw-Hill Films (US), McGraw-Hill Ryerson (Can). Veteran director Jean Renoir guides an actress through the fine points of a character portrayal. Fascinating!

The Electric Flag. 12 min., color, 1972.
Director: John Korty. Distributor: Pyramid Films (US), International Tele-Film Enterprises (Can). The filming of the political campaign in Michael Ritchie's *The Candidate* raises questions concerning the power of the media in real life campaigns.

The Eye Hears, The Ear Sees. 58½ min., color/ b&w, 1970.
Director: Gavin Millar for BBC-TV & The National Film Board of Canada. Distributors: Learning Corp. of America (sale/ rental); the National Film Board of Canada (sale/ rental) & International Film Bureau (sale/ rental). Good, solid introduction to the work of National Film Board of Canada animator Norman McLaren. Many clips.

Famu: The Prague Film School. 54 min., b&w, 1969.
Director: Haro Senft. Distributor: McGraw-Hill Films (US), McGraw-Hill Ryerson (Can). Recaps the founding and development of the Czech school with clips from notable Czech films.

Film: The Art of the Impossible. 27 min., color, 1972.
Director: Michael Ritchie. Distributor: Learning Corp. of America (US), Marlin Motion Pictures (Can). Director Michael Ritchie explains some cinematic elements of subterfuge. Uses examples from popular films, including his own *Downhill Racer.*

The First Flickers. 37 min., b&w/ color, 1969.
Director: Charles Stopak. Distributor: Films Inc. (US), Visual Education Centre (Can). Pretends to be a history of early motion pictures, but is actually an introduction to the valuable paperprint collection at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C.

5X Marilyn. 13½ min., b&w, approx. 1948-1950, released 1974.
Director: Bruce Conner. Distributor: Serious Business Co. A nudie loop which stars (or does it?) a young Marilyn Monroe. Soundtrack reverberates with Marilyn singing "I'm Through With Love." Says a lot about the sadness of Monroe's sex goddess needs and exploitation.

Flicks I. 27 min., b&w, 1971.
Producer: NET-TV. Distributor: Indiana University Audio-Visual Center (US), ITE (Can). A history of early motion pictures.

Flicks II. 27 min., b&w, 1971.
Producer: NET-TV. Distributor: Indiana University Audio-Visual Center (US), ITE (Can). A history of animated cartoons.

Judith Trojan's Checklist will be continued in the May issue of *Take One.*

THE REGULARS

CEL WASHER

CHUCK JONES

Laughter, Scare and Violence

Laughter is usually provoked by something surprising and unexpected happening to someone else.

Scare is usually provoked by something surprising and unexpected that *might* happen to us.

Terror is provoked by something surprising and unexpected that *is* happening to us.

According to my own memory *Scare* can be almost as delightful to a child as *Laughter*. The tales we used to tell each other on Halloween nights and on June-bug whirring summer veranda evenings, scared us into laughter.

Watch the reaction of an audience of children to any kind of dramatic presentation, particularly with infra-red light. It is a surprise and a revelation in itself because children seldom laugh at such things, and little children almost never. But they evidence their surprise and pleasure by the most amazing series of facial and bodily contortions and reactions. They will clap their hands to their faces, bite tongues, cheeks, pigtails, fists and each other, slump down, climb up or crawl under seats, twist a shirt, a skirt, a pinafore or a nose out of recognition. I once saw a small boy manage to turn a tennis shoe completely around on his foot while watching a Punch and Judy Show, a patently impossible act.

There has been much written about children wetting their seats at the scary portions of Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. This, I think, is an unscientific and prejudiced assumption. The evidence that some children wet their seats may be irrefutable, but *when* they wet them is at least open to question. I have heard adults say quite frankly, "I laughed so hard I nearly wet my pants." And there were many exquisitely delightful sequences in *Snow White* that could only be expressed in such a manner.

We *like* to be scared. Particularly as children do we like to be scared. The opening of *Treasure Island* is one of the most artful evocations of pure *Scare* in any language. The lonely bleak headland where the "Admiral Ben Bow Inn" stood, Black Dog appearing out of the mists followed by Blind Pew to give Captain Billy Bones the black spot, meaning death. Jim Hawkins and his mother getting their rightful money from the dead Captain, the pirate's night assault on the inn as Jim and his mother were hunted on the moor, culminating in Blind Pew's pitiful death under the slashing hooves of rescuers' horses. All this is perfect scare, and would, I think, invoke terror in a disturbed child's mind. But so would *Tom Sawyer*, where one man is stabbed to death in a graveyard at midnight, and another dies of starvation within the locked mouth of a cave; or *Huckleberry Finn*, where a fourteen-year-old boy is bloodily shot to death while swimming to escape in the Mississippi River... and two men are tarred and feathered.

Treasure Island may be the bloodiest book in children's literature. I know, because I read it first when I was seven years old with absolute and undivided wonder, excitement, scare and involvement, and I read it again last night and after turning the light out I once again found myself pinned to the top-mast by Israel Hand's clasp-knife, and once again I knew the vicarious pleasure and scare of being Jim Hawkins. I have read *Treasure Island*, I suppose, at least thirty times and always with wonder and delight, and I am always shocked when Long John Silver breaks a loyal crew-man's back with his crutch and then stabs him to death, because I like Long John Silver, and each time I must freshly forgive him and forget his misdeeds so I can forgive him again just as we do with all people we love.

Treasure Island of course is considered a "classic"—indeed it is—and for that reason probably immune to criticism about violence. In recent years violence in cartoons has become a favorite topic for criticism by some. Inevitably the question comes up when I speak at film festivals or colleges.

"What about all that violence?" is usually asked by either a girl studying for her masters degree in education or a sixth grade teacher in San Mateo, and I am distressed that I cannot help them, for my answer is simply: I don't know. The kind of violence I put in the *Roadrunners* I put in because I think it is funny. Just as James Thurber thought it was funny when he had a duelist lopping off his opponent's head and calling, "Touché!", or Ronald Searles' series on St. Trinian's Academy where his little girls are much more interested in tobacco, gin and killing teachers than they are in the more gentle academic pursuits.

In the Coyote and Roadrunner we use a kind of death and resurrection formula: the Coyote is a kind of Phoenix, an implacable and rather single-minded Phoenix if you like, but he does have a strong ability to recover—this kind of thing goes back to Buster Keaton, Harold Lloyd and the Keystone Cops and it seems funny to me... that is why I use it.

And that brings me to another point about humour. I am often asked who I conceive my audience to be. The answer is, I make cartoons for me, which wasn't always true. I once tried studying audiences—making notes and timing laughs and applause. And the more I learned about audiences the worse my cartoons grew. So I gave it up and concentrated on learning a little bit about everything that interested me and a lot about drawing, until my hand would respond to what my mind dictated and my brain was a treasure house of trivia. Then, oddly enough, my cartoons began to evoke laughter.

Laughter—and, in the case of the *Roadrunner* cartoons again—sympathy for the Coyote. And this didn't just happen It is the basic matter of the series: the Coyote tries by any means to capture the Roadrunner, ostensibly and at first to eat him, but this motive has become beclouded and it has become, in my mind at least, a matter of dignity and loss of dignity that forces him to continue. And who is the Coyote's enemy? Why, the Coyote. The Roadrunner has never touched him, never even startled him intentionally beyond coming up behind the Coyote occasionally and going "Beep-Beep!"

No, the only enemy the Coyote has is his overwhelming stubborness. Like all of us, he persists in a course of action long after he has forgotten his original reasons for embarking on it.

The Coyote is a history of my own frustration and war with all tools multiplied only slightly, but I can remember that my wife and daughter would start to weep bitterly and seek hiding places whenever they saw me head toward the tool drawer, if only to hang a picture. I have never reached into that drawer without starting a chain of errors and disasters of various proportions, but like any other man, I would rather succeed in what I can't do than do what I have successfully done before. I have never reached into that drawer without encountering one of those spiny things you stick flowers in. We don't keep that thing in that drawer, but it is always there. I count it a good day when I only get one spine under a fingernail. I tried to get it out of the drawer once, but found out that the last time, when it stuck four fingers at once and had been indeed lifted a few inches out of its nest in the resulting shriek, it had fallen onto a tube of glue, puncturing the tube, and then had finally affixed itself to the drawer for all time. I have tried lack-a-daisically from time to time to remove it, and have succeeded in breaking a rat-tailed file, a kitchen knife, three finger nails, a nail file and a pair of manicure scissors, an egg-beater (in one of my more forceful efforts) and a window when the tail of the rat-tailed file separated from the rat-tailed file.

No, I don't have to leave home to know what the Coyote is likely to try and how he is likely to fall, and I don't have to dramatize as much as you might think, but even while taking the risk of bruising the budding egos of little children, I have eased a good many of my own tensions. It is easier for me to have the Coyote make one small human error and fall on his face than it is for me to fall off a ladder carrying a bucket of yellow paint. I have never fallen off a ladder carrying anything but yellow paint.

It seems to me that innocence of intent by the writer and the reader may be the essential difference between violence and humour.

And humour is very, very demanding... almost as demanding in form as poetry... ●

Chuck Jones—originator of The Roadrunner and Coyote, Pepe le Pew and others—has won two Academy Awards and numerous honors in both art and film. His most recent project has involved the production, direction and writing of a series of half-hour specials for CBS: Kipling's *The White Sea, Mowgli's Brothers, Rikki-Tikki-Tavi*, and Camille Saint Saens' *The Carnival of the Animals*.

SOUND TRACKS

ROBERT FIEDEL

Digging for Goldsmith

Logan's Run: original film soundtrack recording. Music composed and conducted by Jerry Goldsmith. M-G-M MG-1-5302; $7.98.

The Omen: original film soundtrack recording. Music composed by Jerry Goldsmith; conducted by Lionel Newman. Tattoo (RCA) BJL-1-1888; $6.98.

The multi-faceted musical personality of composer Jerry Goldsmith has been, for some time, one of the great enigmas and frustrations on the film music scene. Goldsmith's well-known eclecticism, encompassing such disparate styles as, for example, the Michel Legrand-ish pop idiom in *Papillon*, full-bodied romanticism as in *The Blue Max* and Webern-Varèseian modernity in his landmark *Planet of the Apes* score, is, paradoxically, at once an asset and a detriment to his career. Goldsmith's flexibility has understandably made him one of the most sought-after and successful of current film composers, while, at the same time, his sacrifice of a uniquely personal mode of self-expression naggingly suggests an attitude of insincerity toward his chosen art, impeding serious evaluation of his work. Perhaps Goldsmith's philosophy is that the musical requirements of a film come before self-expression. Composers such as Erich Korngold, Miklòs Ròsa and Bernard Herrmann have also held this principle in high regard, and yet never found it necessary to stray so far afield from their respective idioms, thus strengthening the integrity and validity of their medium. Be certain, though, that Goldsmith is no hack composer; he's amazingly proficient at his various musical guises. But I would like to see him develop a cogent musical identity with which to seriously contribute to the legitimacy of film music. Goldsmith considers himself to be essentially a modernist. The high degree of skill and inventiveness he has displayed in past scores of this ilk clearly mark this as the road for him to follow.

Jerry Goldsmith's musical schizophrenia reasserts itself in his scores for two recent fantasy films. His music for M-G-M's science-fiction extravaganza, *Logan's Run*, is one of the few assets of this bastardized film version of William F. Nolan and George Clayton Johnson's novel, and is in itself highly exemplary of the composer's identity crisis. The stylistic contradictions within this one score range from romantic pastoral passages ("The Monument"), Coplandesque fanfares ("The Sun") and primitive Stravinskian rhythms ("Intensive Care") to atonality ("Ice Sculptures"), avant-garde percussion effects ("You're Renewed") and totally electronic music ("Love Shop"). There's even a brief reference to the famous Strauss-*2001* fanfare in the main title sequence ("The Dome"). Goldsmith's objective in employing this unusually wide-ranging musical palette (even for Goldsmith!) may have been to reinforce the city-outerworld schism essential to the drama. This, however, is an unsatisfying, rather clichéd approach to the problem. I would have preferred the use of orchestral coloring and harmonic structuring within a homogeneous style as a more artful solution. Though, for all my disapproval of this musical potpourri, Goldsmith's score does indeed provide a desperately needed dimension to this mindless and often slipshod production. (To rub salt into the open wounds of science-fiction buffs, two earlier and most promising *Logan's Run* screenplays, one by Nolan and Johnson and a second by *James Bond* series veteran Richard Maibaum, were rejected by producer Saul David in favor of the final David Zelag Goodman drivel.) Much to Goldsmith's credit, there are even moments, such as the climactic destruction of the city and the citizens' discovery of the Old Man, when the music overrides one's intellectual objections to the on-screen nonsense and elicits a warm emotional response. Such is the often underestimated power of film music.

While it effectively fulfills a vital function in the film, the music for *Logan's Run* holds little interest apart from the visuals, and I would recommend the recording only for ardent Goldsmith fans. For some inexplicable reason, the cuts are presented out of sequence, serving only to confuse the listener's attempt to bridge continuity. Tacked on as a final cut is the "Love Theme from *Logan's Run*," an innocuous little ditty which I don't even recall being in the film. The recorded sound and disc surfaces are decent, being far better than what we've come to expect from M-G-M.

In his score for Richard Donner's diabolical thriller, *The Omen*, Goldsmith goes off in still another direction. Here he casts presumably sacrilegious Latin chants (a translation of the text would have been nice) in a chilling style reminiscent of Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*, with the vocal parts being a bizarre amalgam of Orff *cum* Penderecki. The resulting score, quite capable of conjuring up its own images of profane evil, makes for a truly electrifying listening experience and is, without doubt, one of Goldsmith's finest efforts to date. Rather than emphasizing the horrific shocks which *The Omen* apparently offers in abundant quantities, Goldsmith concerned himself with establishing an atmosphere of omnipresent satanic evil, particularly obvious in the sort of twisted *Dies Irae* used as the score's principal recurring theme. This constitutes an intelligent attempt to musically get within the drama, as opposed to simply restating the obvious. Judging from the film's phenomenal box-office gross, Goldsmith's approach was a successful one.

I had every intention of seeing *The Omen* in its recent release until learning that I would be treated to such ingeniously simulated sights as a sheet of glass graphically slicing off David Warner's head, and Lee Remick being splattered all over the street after being thrown out of a window. I then knew why *The Omen*'s ad campaign repeatedly featured the phrase, "You've been warned!" Having good reason to take 20th Century-Fox's publicity department at their word, and strongly objecting to the transformation of my local theater into the Circus Maximus, I wisely decided to boycott *The Omen*.

Here I must admit being at a disadvantage to fully assess the effectiveness of Goldsmith's music in its intended setting. Listening to a film score without having seen the film is, invariably, an incomplete experience comparable to hearing any piece of program music, be it a ballet, opera or tone poem, without prior knowledge of the specified program. (Would any serious operaphile consider a first hearing without a prior reading of the libretto?) The problem of film music is compounded by its being the most highly programmatic of all musical forms. Its programmatic references consist not only of a narrative, but of complexly structured, highly specific images. This does not mean that film music should never be separated from its visual counterpart, as many of the form's detractors have insisted, but only that the listener who has seen the film and retains its images will derive far greater satisfaction from the experience than the listener who hasn't. Also, record manufacturers should be persuaded to include detailed film synopses on soundtrack album jacket liners. The liners for *The Omen* and *Logan's Run* contain no notes at all.

The first cut on Side 2 of *The Omen* LP is "The Piper Dreams," an obligatory "theme song" which is so out of context with the rest of the score as to make its inclusion here ludicrous. My copy of *The Omen* disc is severely warped, and features an annoying low frequency "whoosh" throughout all of Side 2. The surfaces are of the Rice Krispies variety, and are unworthy of what is one of the most brilliantly recorded soundtracks to appear in quite some time.

Obsession: original film soundtrack recording. Music composed and conducted by Bernard Herrmann. The National Philharmonic Orchestra. London Phase-Four SPC 21160; $6.98.

Brian De Palma's obsession with Hitchcock does not end with subject matter. In order to better recreate the special Hitchcockian ambience, De Palma sought out the composer most closely identified with Hitchcock and responsible for much of the effectiveness of his greatest films, Bernard Herrmann, to compose the all-essential background music for *Obsession*. De Palma knew that he had to have Herrmann after his editor, Paul Hirsch, synced up a rough-cut version of De Palma's 1973 film *Sisters* to excerpts from Herrmann's scores for *Vertigo, Psycho* and *Marnie*, with overwhelming results. Fortunately, Herrmann agreed to score *Sisters* in spite of his outrage when De Palma screened the film for him with the Hitchcock music intact. Herrmann was apparently inspired by what he saw (and, no doubt,

Robert D. Fiedel has taught film courses at Queen's College, CUNY since September, 1972. His article "Music by Max Steiner" appears in Ronald Gottesman and Harry Geduld's *The Girl in the Hairy Paw: King Kong as Myth, Movie and Monster*, and he is currently a consultant to The American Film Institute and The Library of Congress for the establishment of a film music preservation program.

secretly flattered by De Palma's blunder), for his *Sisters* score (available on Entr'acte ERQ-7001) proved to be one of his most original and fascinating works to date, and one of the film's major assets, as critics were quick to realize.

Perhaps it is because the *Sisters* score was such a triumph that I expected as much from Herrmann's *Obsession* music, and was subsequently disappointed. The score is unmistakably Herrmann, employing all of the composer's favorite trademarks and devices, such as motifs descending through series of modulations ("Main Title," "Valse Lente," etc.) and a particularly characteristic *agitato* passage in "The Ferry," beginning with a stabbing octave string motif and downward harmonic expansion, strongly reminiscent of the *Psycho* shower murder sequence; but here these devices are only a skeleton in a score distressingly lean of substantial thematic material. Considering *Obsession*'s subject, we might have hoped that this would be another *Vertigo* score. To be sure, it is not; though the music's prevailing mood of mystic-romanticism — a Herrmann *forté* — is similar to the earlier score.

Whatever its faults, there is no denying that Herrmann's *Obsession* music does an exceptionally fine job of enhancing the film. I saw *Obsession* twice, and I must describe one particular sequence where, both times, the music sent icy chills through my central nervous system. Cliff Robertson returns to Florence years after the death of his wife and daughter to visit the cathedral where he and his wife first met. The camera tilts up the long stairway approach to reveal the cathedral's façade, accompanied on the soundtrack by a jolting tympany blast and a statement of the score's principle motif by full orchestra, organ, and the most haunting of all musical sounds, a wordless chorus. The effect is devastating, forcing the realization that Robertson fashioned his wife and daughter's tomb after this very cathedral, and making this scene reverberate with the eeriness of a *déjà vu* experience.

It is for such brilliant moments as this, regardless of the score's overall shortcomings, that the well-recorded *Obsession* disc is a worthy addition to the Herrmann discography. *Obsession* will also be the last Herrmann soundtrack LP to appear, due to the composer's untimely death in December, 1975. As such, it will help to remove the bad taste of Herrmann's dismal *Taxi Driver* score (Arista 4079), actually completed after *Obsession*, and will leave us with a more accurate momento of the composer's artistry. ●

TECHNICAL NOTES

BOB PARENT

The Time Base Code System

One of the disadvantages of trying to cover a large exhibition of new products within the confines of a one-page column format is that there is no space to rap about the significance of the 'improvement of the breed,' let alone delve into advance prototypes of designs that are still in the developmental stage and destined to become tomorrow's new products. While my last column dealt mostly with 'straight' reporting on new products exhibited at the 118th SMPTE Technical Conference, this column will be concerned primarily with the impact of two new developments on the art of cinema.

Since the advent of sync-sound filming techniques, the 'clapstick' has been the stand-by for marking the start of a take simultaneously on both film and soundtrack so that later they can be aligned accurately during the editing process. Primitive, perhaps, but not especially awkward under the controlled conditions of a production set. In documentary filming, however, it is not always possible to expect a riot —or other action—to cease while a flunky runs up and snaps a clapstick, and then signal for a resumption of the action. Although the 'umbilical' cable between camera and recorder has been eliminated by the adoption of crystal controlled camera and recorder drive systems, the industry is still waiting for a practical and workable slating system to arrive.

For several years, talk around the industry has been that the 'Time Base Code' system would be the 'Messiah.' Described briefly in functional terms, TBC consists of components added to each camera and recorder in conjunction with crystal controlled drives, so that alignment information is registered simultaneously at short intervals on the edge of the film and as a separate track on the audio tape. Desired information would be the date and time plus identification of the production and unit (camera or recorder number, for instance). An automated editing console would later align sound and picture automatically for each take just by pressing a button.

The following is a list of Canadian suppliers for a number of products mentioned in last issue's Technical Notes column, kindly provided us by C. Rhodes, Manager of the Professional Division of W. Carsen Co., Ltd.:
Cinema Products — Alex L. Clark
Bolex — W. Carsen
Eclair — W. Carsen
Frezzolini — Kingsway
Sennheiser — Braun
Steenbeck — Kingsway
Magnasync/ Moviola — W. Carsen
Multi-Track Magnetics — Braun
Super 8-Sound — Canadian Super 8 Centre

Although the functional description sounds quite simple, the actual engineering of such a system is quite complex. So much so that several segments of the industry on both sides of both oceans have been busy with the development of the 'ultimate' system for several years. Whether the 'ultimate' has arrived yet or not remains to be seen, but the first viable system has been introduced in Germany. And, unless outdone by a competitor, it will probably establish itself as the industry standard before the year is out.

This system is the result of research and development collaboration between the Institut fur Rundfunktechnik of Munich, the European Broadcasting Union and the initial group of manufacturers: Arriflex, Eclair, Aäton, Nagra, Stellavox and Steenbeck. Initial production is in 16mm, but the system is compatible for all formats from 8 to 70mm. The modified cameras and recorders register the year, month, day, hour, minute, second and an identification number in four-bit binary code once per second on both film and tape. Each unit is synchronized by a master clock and, depending on the crystal and operating conditions, each unit will maintain accuracy within one frame over a minimum time span of four hours. Obviously, the number of cameras and recorders that can be used simultaneously in sync is limited solely by the producer's budget—or pocketbook. Until such time as the 'ultimate' TBC system becomes accepted by the industry and is in full production, the price tag can be expected to be high.

On a major theatrical production TBC will be mainly a convenience and cost-saving accessory. Occasionally, a scene will be filmed in a manner that would be impossible or prohibitively expensive without TBC. News-gathering and documentary productions (including documentary-style productions such as *Woodstock*) will be able to achieve otherwise unobtainable coverage and/or creativity, plus cost-saving.

Most video networks and larger stations use single-system sound for spot news and the higher quality double-system for documentaries. The single system is needed for the speed of cueing on a newscast where seldom more than a few seconds of the most pertinent scene is broadcast. If this footage is later used as part of a documentary, extra transfers and lower sound quality complicate the editing procedures. TBC, however, can be used for both spot news and documentary work, thereby eliminating the maintenance of two types of equipment while enabling a consistent maximum sound quality in all filming operations.

Look for most creative innovations from TBC to come from the ranks of the independent producers. They are usually the first to try new approaches and then when they score at the box-office, Hollywood jumps on the bandwagon with their clichés: The concert performance genre of film would benefit immeasurably from TBC. To start with, contemporary recording practice is to record each microphone on a separate track to permit additional balance adjustments during the mix and the capability of mixing for several formats from the same master

Bob Parent is a free-lance photographer-filmmaker living in New York City. From an early career in mechanical engineering, he branched out into still photography in the mid-40s, and during the 50s specialized in photography of jazz musicians. He moved into photo-journalism and experimental and documentary filmmaking in the 60s, and has two experimental films in the Coopérative des Cinéastes Independants in Montreal. He is a member of S.M.P.T.E., Millenium Film Workshop (also an instructor), and A.I.V.F. His photographs for the book *Jazz Is* by Nat Hentoff, recently published by Random House, were rated 'splendid' by the *New York Times*.

(mono, stereo, quad, etc.). By using one track for TBC, the recording master could also be used for the film track master with the obviously superior miking and audio capabilities, and an unlimited number of cameras could be operating, completely mobile and independent.

In the editing room, the TBC-equipped console brings to fruition the efforts of the camera and sound crews faster than any of the older slating systems. In addition to the speed and accuracy of aligning sound and image in the editing process, TBC is also a boon in the process of conforming the printing master to the edited work-print. In fact, the day is not too far away when it will be possible to put an edited workprint on a special conforming machine, put the originals in its storage bank, program supplementary instructions and then press a button. The machine will then search, match, cut, splice, and out will come a printing master that conforms to the edited print frame-for-frame!

Another new trend in editing room equipment gives the editor more direct involvement in the sound mixing process. It is a table console with a picture head that is combined with a mixing panel which is fed by two or more reproducers and, in turn, a master recorder—with all transports in interlock. For many types of productions, this set-up by-passes the mixing studio with considerable cost- and time-saving. For the filmmaker who likes to be intimately involved in all phases of a film's production, a much closer personal touch can be obtained than by trying to communicate nuances to another person. Provided, of course, that the soundtrack elements do not require special treatment—such as filtering—which requires the facilities of a sound studio and a perceptive engineer. Magnasync/Moviola and Multi-Track Magnetics each demonstrated operational models at the last SMPTE Technical Conference.

And there it is, two new systems. Each of which will, on the one hand, automate and eliminate a job; while on the other hand, open up new possibilities for creative endeavour. ●

LETTER FROM ROME

GIDEON BACHMANN

Sexy Fascism

"The most banal way of making a fashionable film about fascism today is to use a story of sexual intrigue set in Nazi Germany. Despite the fact that the major Italian directors who have recently utilised sex in a film about those years have tried to dissociate these two themes and create, instead, an honest analysis of various sociological phenomena, the impression has gone abroad that Visconti, Pasolini and Liliana Cavani had made films that saw the sadistic use of sex as a typical fascist mode of behaviour. What I tried to do in my new film, *Salon Kitty*, was to go deeper than that. None of us have actually lived through the fascist era as conscious adults, and none of us are trying to say that those days were actually like that. But we are trying to use history as a lesson for today, and are abstracting from reality a meaning that is important for people going to the cinema now. I, for example, am interested in the conflict between two typical ideologies: an ideology of death, like that of fascism, and an ideology of life, like eroticism in human relationships. Under fascist systems, all normal, emotional expressions of sex in romantic unions were systematically destroyed."

This is Tinto Brass speaking, an Italian director whose film about a brothel in the Berlin of the war years has been a top money-making film in Italy since it was released. Despite the fact that the film, for its Italian release, was cut by some 16 small scenes, and was thus, according to its director, "robbed of its deeper meaning and turned into an obscenity" by the producers who succumbed to the demands of censorship, the film is having a tumultuous career. It has now opened in Germany, and is about to embark on an international career which promises to be a financial triumph. And all this despite the fact that it has been widely attacked as unreal and as a falsification. *Salon Kitty* was a brothel that really existed, and the fact that it was used as a spying centre where through the use of hidden microphones the Nazi party hierarchy spied on each other, has also been documented historically. It was Heydrich, the Gestapo leader who was later killed by guerillas in Czechoslovakia and for the revenge of whose murder the Nazis killed the entire village of Lidice, who had the original idea, and forced a group of "B.D.M."-girls (Bund Deutscher Maedchen — the female equivalent of the Hitler Youth) into a life of prostitution, teaching them, first, the wiles of love and then infiltrating them among the real whores at Kitty's establishment on Giesebrechtstrasse, near the Kurfuerstendamm. According to Brass, Heydrich's quest was for absolute power, and he used the bedroom secrets of his fellow-officers for blackmailing purposes. In the film, in the end, he is caught in his own web, when the game is played in reverse: one of the prostitutes (Therese Ann Savoy) records, on a remote radio supplied incongruously by an American counterspy, a self-destructive monologue of the person who plays Heydrich in the film: Helmut Berger, in a typical role. Carried to his superiors, the recording is equivalent to a death sentence, duly carried out in a sauna filled with naked men.

The melodrama of this filmic unwinding does not seem to worry Brass, though the real *Salon Kitty* saw a much less romantic ending in the ruins of postwar Berlin. Nor does he seem to be particularly disturbed by the fact that the German magazine *Spiegel* has since published an excerpt from the memoirs of one of the real girls so recruited and used by Heydrich, from whose tale a very different picture emerges. Where, in the Brass film, everything at Giesebrechtstrasse was Art Nouveau, lavish decor, low lights, erotic shows and multifariously decadent, with all the possible (and, it would seem, some impossible) sexual aberrations depicted, Liesel Ackerman tells a different story. According to her there was luxury, but it was mostly of a culinary nature, and the sex was simplistic, and while many prominent guests frequented the place, none of their sexual demands seem to have been exorbitant or particular to fascism. The only novelty was the microphones, and they weren't particularly fascist, only old-fashioned and rudimentary, not very useful after all. Tinto Brass does not claim, in fact, to have reconstructed the "real" Salon of Frau Schmidt. He was looking for an opportunity to describe the encounter between the ideology that these girls had been raised on—total

Gideon Bachmann Collection

Fascist reflections...Tinto Brass' Salon Kitty.

Frequent contributor **Gideon Bachmann** has made a number of films for TV, including *Underground New York* (1968), *Ciao Federico* (1970), and *Burton* (1973). He free-lances regularly for such publications as *The Times* (London), *Messaggero* (Rome), *Spiegel* (Hamburg) and *Sight & Sound* (London), and is a regular correspondent for the national television networks of Britain, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Switzerland. A previous president of the American Federation of Film Societies, he has lectured at more than 30 American, Canadian, British, Italian, and other universities.

devotion to a deadly cause—and the erotic life they were suddenly exposed to, with its basic orientation towards love and life, even if it thwarted forms. He says that it was here, in the service of the body, that these girls must have had their first realisations that something was wrong with the ideas they had learned. "My film," he says, "concentrates on these realisations and the traumatic experiences that were caused by them. Some fell in love, some committed suicide, and some were killed for rebelling, but none could remain blind camp followers. Sex rekindled in them their sense of identity."

Some of the exteriors of the film were shot in Berlin itself, along the S-Bahn tracks and the shores of Wannsee, but most of it is imaginary, designed by Ken Adam, Oscar-winning British set designer. The style of the period was widely employed, even though the decorations are more 1920s and 30s than actual wartime Berlin. Brass seems to have read many of the books describing the period, and freely quotes Doeblin and the visual traditions of Grosz and Dix. He says that the Nazi election campaign in 1933, for example, was later copied in detail by the Italian Christian-Democrat election campaigners in 1948 and 1949, who, like the Nazis, showed the Russian bear embracing the Colosseum as he had embraced the Reichstag on the posters of Hindenburg's Germany. He finds many other analogies between the rise of Nazism and the current political situation in Italy, but prefers, instead of dealing with this directly, to utilise the past for the making of a contemporary statement, "because it can show, through the clarification that comes with historical perspective, in greater simplicity the dangers that face us today." *Salon Kitty* does indeed simplify the past, and that is perhaps what its detractors resent most. And it does make concessions to public taste and requirements in its orgy scenes, its lavishness, its "happy end," when the newly-conscious madam, with her protégé-prostitute, who have jointly caused the fall of the despot, drink to the destruction that is overtaking them as Allied bombs begin to hit the discarded palace of joy. Undoubtedly it is also a film that could not have been made except in an atmosphere of great sexual laxity, such as characterises current Italian cinema, despite all claims to the contrary. It is a film that is obviously headed for censorship problems, but since I have not seen the cut version I cannot say if the film is indeed cheapened by the omissions. In any case, an Italian court has now rejected the claims of the director, who had asked for his film to be withdrawn unless restored to its full length. The Italian public, stirred by the story, is happy to go and see the truncated version. And as far as the story in the *Spiegel* is concerned, Brass himself says—"It will only add to the publicity for the film."

In fact, to Brass all means are good to get the film seen and thus to get the message across. "We are threatened," he says, "by a de-humanisation process which is not just in the fascist movements that are active in Italy today, but is inherent in our whole industrial texture of life. I may see all this too romantically, and my film may be attacked for being too linear, too emotional, too construed, but romanticism and sentiments are the true dimensions of anarchy and I have always been an anarchist, a libertarian at heart. I may be fighting a losing battle, but in these terms I prefer to be on the losing side, with all the other romanticists, anarchists, poets, revolutionaries and Reichian or Marcusian utopists. To me, sex and fascism are not the same. Sex is life, even if in today's world this view is losing out. After everything is counted up, to be on this losing side is a privilege."

"I hope to denude the logic and the mystery of power itself."

The romantic view will certainly influence the latest work of Tinto Brass, which is the mammoth American production of *Gore Vidal's Caligula*, produced by *Penthouse*-publisher Bob Guccione in Italy. Peter O'Toole and Malcolm McDowell play some of the major parts, but Ingrid Thulin, who played Madame Kitty, and Maria Schneider, who had been sought for other parts in the film, refused to participate. The film is an historical reconstruction with contemporary dimensions. Taking the figure of the mad Roman emperor as that of an innocent abroad, who suddenly finds himself with this toy called absolute power, Brass and Vidal hope to paint an image of modern man, totally unprepared for the world of infinite possibilities that the technical age promises. At the same time Brass hopes to "decodify" the language of petit-bourgeois art. Brass feels that culture has always been out of reach of the masses, an alibi of an elite, and Caligula's power symbolises the absolute hierarchy of the elite become individual. Art had become, according to him, a series of mysteries, signs, symbols and secret languages, in the possession of the few. "By making a film about power, and making it 'from the inside' instead of making a film that shows how power destroys from the outside, avoiding the usual depiction of victims and mechanisms, I hope to denude the logic and the mystery of power itself."

Brass does not fear the criticism that has been launched against *Salon Kitty*, and which might easily be launched against a major project such as *Caligula*, especially since it will again be an historical reconstruction of an imaginary, abstracted style. "Kitsch," he says, "can be a political tool. It depends on how it is used and who uses it. When it is the result of a limited mind, in other words, when it is involuntary Kitsch, produced by a decadent, empty culture seeking non-existent values like the Nazis did in looking for myths to justify their megalomania, then it is negative. But when it is voluntarily created to point up the deficiencies of despotic regimes, of epochs without value, or of empty human hearts, then it can be extremely useful as an artistic tool. Kitsch must be used critically in order to make a clear statement. It has, basically, the same function as history: to filter and symbolise our existence." ●

NOTES FROM THE NEW CINEMA

BOB COWAN

Four From Last Season

Here are a few of the films I never got around to writing about during last season's viewing...

Max's Shirt by Bob Fleischer.

Max's Shirt by Bob Fleischer is a very simple film and a very affectionate one. It combines the best concentrated qualities of a Japanese Haiku with a kind of very American nostalgia. It is also a film of orchestration, of concern for formal values of color, movement and spatial relationships. The following are excerpts from an article by Fleischer himself concerning the making of the film:

"Around 1970 I acted in the first of eight plays for Richard Foreman. During rehearsals of the first play, I discovered that physical dexterity was as much a requirement as my acting ability, so old clothes were needed to absorb the dirt from the unswept floor. Not long after the first rehearsals, I went into Korvette's to look for a shirt to use as part of my stage apparel. As I was walking through one of the aisles, I saw this green shirt, whose color lacked richness and density. I checked it out for size, saw that the price was reasonable, felt that I could roll all over the floor with it without fear that I was ruining a good shirt, so I bought it. It lasted for seven out of the eight plays I appeared in.

"With the third play, "Sophia equals Wisdom," I became Max, a part I played in all the plays after, except for "Paint," where I was Jack-of-all-trades. The shirt became somewhat famous, especially with most of Foreman's friends. Near the end of the seventh play, I wanted to make a film. As I was about to go to sleep one night, ideas about my shirt came back to me. A film about the shirt! I could see it almost in my dreams, the shirt hanging on a line in someone's backyard. I could see the sunlight pouring through it, the frayed sleeves flapping in the breeze. I felt it would be a film about the shirt at rest, almost like a person relaxing, and enjoying the sun and the atmosphere surrounding it.

"After a few weeks of asking and not finding, I ran into a couple of friends of mine who lived near the Museum of Natural History, and found that they had a backyard and were willing to let me use it for my filming. After first seeing the backyard, I noticed that someone had painted a dragon on the wall, and some Japanese mountains on another wall. It was a beautiful backyard, with a couple of trees and flowers in it. So on a summer day in 1975, I shot the footage that eventually became the film called *Max's Shirt*.

"I started at ten o'clock but had to wait a short while while a clothesline was bought and tied to two trees in the backyard. Things began as I imagined they would. I panned left to right from a tree to the shirt top, with the painting of the dragon on the distant wall. Since the film I was using had a slow speed, I wasn't sure if the dragon would be

Bob Cowan is a Canadian prize-winning filmmaker living and working in Brooklyn, New York.

sharp in relation to the shirt, but I was using a wide-angle lens, which gives sharp definition from foreground to background. Everything was going along well and I was into my second roll of film, when the light seemed to disappear and I couldn't get exposure in the position I was shooting in. The sun seemed to have climbed behind the tall buildings surrounding the backyard. So against my better judgment, I moved the shirt off the line and onto a chair that was situated at the other end of the backyard where there seemed to be an abundance of light. I set the shirt on the chair, as if it was a person resting. After a few panning-up-and-down shots, I moved the shirt again. I reset the clothesline between two other trees, in an area of bright sunlight. From there on in the shooting became a breeze in more ways than one, and I finished the day's shooting (and the film's shooting) in a blaze of sunlight.

"When I had the film developed and printed, I found that all had come out well. The editing became another problem. My first cut revealed to me that the scenes with the shirt on the chair, as I originally suspected, wouldn't work. Some scenes that I omitted in my first cut eventually replaced the scenes with the shirt on the chair. One shot in particular—the bottom part of the shirt, with the dragon fence in the background—much to my pleasure, became integrated in my final cut. A second panning shot from a tree (the leaves are seen at the beginning of the pan) to the shirt on the line, was also integrated in the final cut. Since I intended to use only one panning shot originally, I was stuck with a beautiful panning shot that I wanted to integrate into the film. Finally I resolved the problem by using both panning shots. The first one related the shirt to a series of shots of the shirt being manipulated by the breeze, as if the shirt was dancing.

"The last five or six shots in the film were basically edited in the camera. It may seem insane, but to me it seemed as if the shirt was alive, especially in the latter scenes with the shirt flapping in the breeze.

"On an evening in late November, 1975, *Max's Shirt* made its debut during my birthday show at the Collective for Living Cinema. After the screening of the film, I came out in front of the audience wearing the shirt. It was the last time that I ever wore the shirt. It was retired to the deepest recess of my closet. Many ballplayers retire their uniforms when they retire, but no uniform ever benefited a person like this green one; like this one that I had bought in Korvette's some years ago."

The Text of Light by Stan Brakhage.
The Text of Light by Stan Brakhage is advertised as "a film which is the result of a year's exploration of light, color and movement, and is, as a result, a film of intense visual experience." This kind of hype might have applied to some of Brakhage's earlier work, but it certainly doesn't apply to such an innocuous film as this. It's hard to believe such a concentrated effort went into making this film, which is creatively as stimulating to look at as elevator music is to listen to. I mean, it's pleasant enough, but it's no more than a kind of visual Muzak. The images follow one another like a procession of stills without any particular reason for when they begin or end. Any subtlety of movement within the frame is destroyed by shaky camera movements and abrupt cutting. Breaks occur that seem completely arbitrary.

The choosing of such a pretentious title (a close runner-up is another title of his called *The Art of Vision*) must have been an attempt to justify the creative emptiness of the content.

Homage to Magritte by Anita Thacher.
The images in Anita Thacher's film contain a great deal of the various elements that reflect the spirit and feeling of a Magritte painting. The humor, the mystery, and the sense of just the right juxtaposition of opposing images; the ironic concepts are all there. At the same time, this is not just another film imitating work done in another art form. It is a genuine expression in itself.

A rectangular image of water is inserted inside another image of water. Both images are more or less the same, but the insert image moves at a slower rate. The inner image changes to a falling broken egg. Images of counterpoint, textures and surprise.

A woman places some flowers in a vase, her image reflected in a mirror. Her reflection disappears while she continues her activity. The mirror images become full of sea, sky; the images reversed, turned around, reflecting nothing in the immediate environment. Landscape is reversed, land at the top, sea in the middle and sky at the bottom.

As the woman hums to herself, the view in the window changes from day to night to a galaxy of stars, and thence to an enormous head of the same girl. The entire room is flooded with clouds.

Describing a few of the images is about the best way I can think of to convey the startling effect of these evocative combinations. The film's effects are technically well done, so one is able to concentrate at all times on their poetic magic, on the various spatial relationships and meanings.

Anita Thacher attended Antioch College and received her B.A. from the New School for Social Research. She has worked professionally in film since 1967 on 35mm features and independent documentaries and has worked on television specials.

True Blue and Dreamy by Curt McDowell.
True Blue and Dreamy is one of Curt McDowell's best-realized films and one of his most vulnerable. In spite of a certain awkwardness in his use of symbolism, there is a personal intensity in many of the images that expresses a real feeling of nightmare and obsession. The explicit sexual beginning of the film never separates itself from the totality of the work as has happened in some of his previous work. It isn't even erotic; it's more of an expression of desperation than it is of sensuality. Throughout these scenes the players seem distracted, as if they were acting out some kind of sacrificial ritual. The feeling is one of impersonality. The naked hero moves through several dream events carrying a flood lamp, brandishing it like a weapon. Several people attempt to enter a window accompanied by the music of a South American dance band. Their speeded-up motion makes them appear like twitching, threatening insects. A young man (George Kuchar) seems trapped in childhood terrors as he squats on the floor by his bed, trembling under the glare of the light. Slowly sneaking into the main line of the film, at first through musical excerpts, and later through images and references to images, are echoes of fragments from the movie *The Red Shoes*. The haunting *Red Shoes* ballet music fills the soundtrack and is even hummed at one point. A new character is introduced in the form of a ballet dancer. The eye makeup on her and the protagonist of the film is the same as the theatrical makeup worn by Moira Shearer in *Red Shoes*. There is also a cross reference repeated several times of railway tracks. Moira Shearer (as Vicki) leaps to her death in front of an oncoming train in the original film. Also, in the last scene in *The Red Shoes* there is a prolonged shot of Moira Shearer's feet as she races down a staircase to her eventual death. In Curt's film the dancer, wearing very much the same costume and makeup, also races down a staircase. The shooting of the scene is similar in both cases. The fragmented memory of *The Red Shoes* overlaps the real memory of some private nightmare. ●

FLAMINGO HOURS

GENE YOUNGBLOOD

Genuine Replicas

I'm thinking about certain moments that become possible as one sits before the cinema screen, moments of extraordinary exaltation when suddenly those same old codes are saying something completely new and suddenly not only a new cinema but a new self is articulated. At these precious moments two screens ignite with the flicker of cinema light, the screen out there and the screen in here, and there's a fusion and a new reality and I'm thinking of Bob Dylan: "Whatever colors you have in your mind, I'll show them to you and you'll see them shine."

I'm thinking about transcendence, I guess, and about the movies that have made it possible for me now and then. Almost always it's an epistomological transcendence made possible when a film treats its own reality as a plastic artifact. I'm thinking, for example, of Jack Hazan's *A Bigger Splash:* about the notion that a group of men and women should assemble before the camera to re-enact their past history together, and how this re-enactment becomes not only a totally original act but a meditation on the nature of representation — which of course suits perfectly a film about David Hockney, whom I encountered in the lobby of the Chateau Marmont the day after I saw the film back in 1974, and it could still have *been* the film so far as I knew or cared. That's the kind of attitude Jack Hazan and the people in this movie have

Gene Youngblood is an author, lecturer, researcher, and teacher specializing in the study of mass communication media, their social implications and uses. He is the author of *Expanded Cinema* (1970), and of the forthcoming *The Videosphere* (Spring, 1977), a political and philosophical book about the effect of the mass media on human evolution.

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sharp in relation to the shirt, but I was using a wide-angle lens, which gives sharp definition from foreground to background. Everything was going along well and I was into my second roll of film, when the light seemed to disappear and I couldn't get exposure in the position I was shooting in. The sun seemed to have climbed behind the tall buildings surrounding the backyard. So against my better judgment, I moved the shirt off the line and onto a chair that was situated at the other end of the backyard where there seemed to be an abundance of light. I set the shirt on the chair, as if it was a person resting. After a few panning-up-and-down shots, I moved the shirt again. I reset the clothesline between two other trees, in an area of bright sunlight. From there on in the shooting became a breeze in more ways than one, and I finished the day's shooting (and the film's shooting) in a blaze of sunlight.

"When I had the film developed and printed, I found that all had come out well. The editing became another problem. My first cut revealed to me that the scenes with the shirt on the chair, as I originally suspected, wouldn't work. Some scenes that I omitted in my first cut eventually replaced the scenes with the shirt on the chair. One shot in particular—the bottom part of the shirt, with the dragon fence in the background—much to my pleasure, became integrated in my final cut. A second panning shot from a tree (the leaves are seen at the beginning of the pan) to the shirt on the line, was also integrated in the final cut. Since I intended to use only one panning shot originally, I was stuck with a beautiful panning shot that I wanted to integrate into the film. Finally I resolved the problem by using both panning shots. The first one related the shirt to a series of shots of the shirt being manipulated by the breeze, as if the shirt was dancing.

"The last five or six shots in the film were basically edited in the camera. It may seem insane, but to me it seemed as if the shirt was alive, especially in the latter scenes with the shirt flapping in the breeze.

"On an evening in late November, 1975, *Max's Shirt* made its debut during my birthday show at the Collective for Living Cinema. After the screening of the film, I came out in front of the audience wearing the shirt. It was the last time that I ever wore the shirt. It was retired to the deepest recess of my closet. Many ballplayers retire their uniforms when they retire, but no uniform ever benefited a person like this green one; like this one that I had bought in Korvette's some years ago."

The Text of Light by Stan Brakhage.
The Text of Light by Stan Brakhage is advertised as "a film which is the result of a year's exploration of light, color and movement, and is, as a result, a film of intense visual experience." This kind of hype might have applied to some of Brakhage's earlier work, but it certainly doesn't apply to such an innocuous film as this. It's hard to believe such a concentrated effort went into making this film, which is creatively as stimulating to look at as elevator music is to listen to. I mean, it's pleasant enough, but it's no more than a kind of visual Muzak. The images follow one another like a procession of stills without any particular reason for when they begin or end. Any subtlety of movement within the frame is destroyed by shaky camera movements and abrupt cutting. Breaks occur that seem completely arbitrary.

The choosing of such a pretentious title (a close runner-up is another title of his called *The Art of Vision*) must have been an attempt to justify the creative emptiness of the content.

Homage to Magritte by Anita Thacher.
The images in Anita Thacher's film contain a great deal of the various elements that reflect the spirit and feeling of a Magritte painting. The humor, the mystery, and the sense of just the right juxtaposition of opposing images; the ironic concepts are all there. At the same time, this is not just another film imitating work done in another art form. It is a genuine expression in itself.

A rectangular image of water is inserted inside another image of water. Both images are more or less the same, but the insert image moves at a slower rate. The inner image changes to a falling broken egg. Images of counterpoint, textures and surprise.

A woman places some flowers in a vase, her image reflected in a mirror. Her reflection disappears while she continues her activity. The mirror images become full of sea, sky; the images reversed, turned around, reflecting nothing in the immediate environment. Landscape is reversed, land at the top, sea in the middle and sky at the bottom.

As the woman hums to herself, the view in the window changes from day to night to a galaxy of stars, and thence to an enormous head of the same girl. The entire room is flooded with clouds.

Describing a few of the images is about the best way I can think of to convey the startling effect of these evocative combinations. The film's effects are technically well done, so one is able to concentrate at all

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FLAMINGO HOURS

GENE YOUNGBLOOD

Genuine Replicas

I'm thinking about certain moments that become possible as one sits before the cinema screen, moments of extraordinary exaltation when suddenly those same old codes are saying something completely new and suddenly not only a new cinema but a new self is articulated. At these precious moments two screens ignite with the flicker of cinema light, the screen out there and the screen in here, and there's a fusion and a new reality and I'm thinking of Bob Dylan: "Whatever colors you have in your mind, I'll show them to you and you'll see them shine."

I'm thinking about transcendence, I guess, and about the movies that have made it possible for me now and then. Almost always it's an epistomological transcendence made possible when a film treats its own reality as a plastic artifact. I'm thinking, for example, of Jack Hazan's *A Bigger Splash:* about the notion that a group of men and women should assemble before the camera to re-enact their past history together, and how this re-enactment becomes not only a totally original act but a meditation on the nature of representation — which of course suits perfectly a film about David Hockney, whom I encountered in the lobby of the Chateau Marmont the day after I saw the film back in 1974, and it could still have *been* the film so far as I knew or cared. That's the kind of attitude Jack Hazan and the people in this movie have

Gene Youngblood is an author, lecturer, researcher, and teacher specializing in the study of mass communication media, their social implications and uses. He is the author of *Expanded Cinema* (1970), and of the forthcoming *The Videosphere* (Spring, 1977), a political and philosophical book about the effect of the mass media on human evolution.

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about reality, and that's why in both conception and execution the film is such a knockout.

It really is a dynamite picture, haunting and powerful as hell, and when I saw it again recently I thought there are two principal reasons for this. The first is Hazan's total mastery of the medium (the film is utterly ravishing) and the smartness of his decisions, which *imply* rather than assert the ideas in the film, even when he's making rather obvious metaphors about representation and reality (i.e., tableaux designed to look like Hockney's paintings). The result is a cool dispassionate resonance, moody and mysterious, that pervades every scene.

The second source of power in *A Bigger Splash* is our awareness that these are the real people who actually lived through the traumatic

"There's a sense in which S & M is the ultimate theatre, the quintessential case of life as art."

intimacies which they are now re-enacting — in a sense, pretending to be themselves when they were someone else — and this results in two dramas: the one *observed* on the screen *out there* and the one inferred on the screen *in here*. These parallel ontogenies, each implying the other, further deepen and enrich a film whose very construction is as enigmatic as life itself, at once documentary and dream.

A similar duality is behind the fascination of Barbet Schroeder's *Maitresse:* the unmistakable authenticity of the sadomasochism makes it clear that two realities are operating here — the reality of the actors pretending to be sadists and the reality of the masochists pretending to be actors. There's a sense in which S&M is the ultimate theatre, the quintessential case of life as art; what's so extraordinary about *Maitresse* is the knowledge that these aristocratic French masochists have paid handsomely for the privilege of using the film as a vehicle for their own personal theatre, whose artifice subsumes and transcends that of the film itself: their "acts" are their lives, and while they're on screen the film is reduced to a pretext for living.

We may be repelled, even horrified, as we watch the "maitresse" pierce a man's nipples with four-inch needles and then nail his foreskin to a board; so intense is this image that it obliterates the rest of the film. Yet we cannot ascribe this power solely to shock value or perverted sensationalism; at least in part it's the knowledge that the poor crucified man has used *us* to reach his kingdom, that behind the mute visage of his rubber mask he smiles in triumph: lines of intention converge from two directions and the act of observation is made an act of complicity. *Maitresse* isn't a great film but it's a damned interesting one, with a handsome visual surface and a chemistry between Bulle Ogier and Gerard Depardieu that makes the whole thing possible to begin with.

I'm thinking of Fassbinder's *The American Soldier* (1970), *film noir* out of Godard and Warhol yet so completely and originally Fassbinder, whose vision of universal sexual repression drives the film beyond established horizons. This extraordinary movie contains two masterful set-pieces that are paragons of Fassbinder's self-referential technique: the sequence in the "Lola Montez" bar drenched in moody *mise-en-scene,* the mirrors, the woman selling porno like it was opium, the melancholy chanteuse singing slightly off-key but creating an elegant mood, the Ophulsian sweep of the camera, the melodramatic Sirkian dialogue; and also the sequence in which Ricky visits his mother and homosexual brother (Kurt Raab), the Gothic lighting, the piano and the pinball machine in their living room, the brother crushing a champagne glass in his hand and collapsing in Susan Hayward hysteria... How outrageous yet totally gripping, this unusual technique that makes a kind of meta-level reference to itself in a way that increases the evocative power of established conventions by making those conventions the subject of the film.

I'm thinking of André Téchiné's *Souvenirs d'en France* (1975), a great modern masterpiece of such multiple invention that at least two viewings are necessary to encompass it all. A *tour-de-force* blend of political consciousness, high romance, and cinema-love, this movie operates on several levels of self-references simultaneously, all of them concerned with the effect of history on the present.

First there's the level of twentieth century European history, embodied in the rise and fall of a family dynasty that comes to represent not only super-industrialism but also Fascism, Vichy, and the Underground. Next there's the level of self-referential cinema history through which Téchiné makes us aware of how we respond to his own film. Each sequence in this film is stylistically an autonomous entity in which specific film styles, specific films, even specific scenes from films are used for their own intrinsic power as elements of cinematic grammar, not as cultish "homages" or arcane "quotes" for the edification of movie buffs, though they can be treated as such superficially.

What worked for Welles in *The Magnificent Ambersons* and *The Third Man,* what worked for Hitchcock and Minnelli and Cukor and Godard and Bertolucci also works for Téchiné, because these devices are part of our consciousness and because Téchiné knows how to employ them for what they are. They appear abruptly in scenes where they don't seem to fit the content; yet they work superbly because they have only emotional not semantic value. Jeanne Moreau is now Bette Davis, now Joan Crawford, now Katharine Hepburn, but at the same time she's not those women at all, she's a modern vehicle for the symbolic orientations they represent — orientations which are non-personal, that is, political, insofar as they color our perception of the present.

Téchiné uses all elements of film to fashion his brilliant self-referential political romance. Consider Phillipe Sarde's music, for example: haunting, original, yet rich in *déja-vu* as echoes of Max Steiner and Bernard Herrmann drift through a scene when least expected. Indeed, it's the out-of-context use of these elements that aligns Téchiné with Fassbinder and accounts for the effectiveness of a style that's both replica and original because it gives new meaning to old words and creates a new reality. ●

OVER-LOOKED & UNDER-RATED

Most people have favorite films that were never promoted, distributed or exhibited well enough to reach a wide audience. This column is open to readers who want to spread the word about such films, and about films which they feel were badly underrated by the critics the first time around.

The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe. Dir. Luis Bunuel. After languishing on its own filmic island for almost 25 years, Luis Bunuel's *The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* has recently been rescued and resusitated.

This was Bunuel's first color film, and the garish pastels and flamboyant foliage are testimony to the excesses of 1950s Technicolor. After a rocky low-budget start (the shipwreck is depicted through shadowplays and a noisy soundtrack) with acting that often resembles Classics Illustrated come to life, the story picks up its own pace, gradually drawing us into Crusoe's struggle to perfect himself and his surroundings. The dream of a jewelled paradise set in an azure sea turns out to be Crusoe's nightmare, a living tomb instead of the Garden of Eden.

The adaptation is surprisingly faithful to Defoe, but on the evidence of *The Milky Way* and *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie,* the whole affair could be a tongue-in-cheek satire on the foibles and follies of the 18th century (and modern) civilization. Nor is *Robinson Crusoe* without glimpses of Bunuel's famed surrealistic touch. A dream sequence features a fever-crazed Crusoe pleading with his father for some water while the old man pours bucket after bucket over a grotesquely large pig.

Dale Pollock

Steel Arena. Dir. Mark Lester. This compendium of road movie action follows a drifter (Dusty Russell) as he tries his hand at everything that can be done with a car from running moonshine, through demolition derbies and figure-eight races, to stunt driving. The performers here are professional auto daredevils (the Hell Drivers), not actors, and this becomes obvious whenever the main characters start delivering lines. An earlier effort by the maker of *Truck Stop Women,* this film has many flaws but also features some lyric photography and scenes that capture the mystique of the road more effectively than anything in glossier road films like *Vanishing Point.*

My Name Is Nobody. Dir. Tonino Valerii. An aging gunfighter (Henry Fonda) tries to retire quietly, but a younger gun (Terence Hill, the "Nobody" of the title) who has admired him since boyhood maneuvers him into capping his career with the singlehanded defeat of a gang of 150 outlaws. This comic western was "based on an idea by Sergio Leone" and is a cross between his usual style and the Trinity comedies that Hill has starred in. It may be that Leone had a greater hand in its making than the credits indicate and took this opportunity to spoof himself. There are a number of "in" jokes, like a tombstone bearing the name "Sam Peckinpah"; and Hill does his quick draw and macho eating and drinking routines that are standard in the Trinity films. The photography is impeccable, and the scope screen is used most effectively. The film is too long for its plot, however, and lacks cohesion; moreover, some gaps in continuity suggest that it may already have been recut to find a better market.

Richard J. Leskosky

What? Dir. Roman Polanski. More than one critic suggested that *Dance of the Vampires* (a.k.a. *The Fearless Vampire Killers*) was more disturbing than funny; perhaps that is why it didn't get the raves it deserved. And perhaps the same is true of *What?*, an extraordinary voyage down the rabbit-hole of surrealism that seems as personal to Polanski as *La Dolce Vita* was to Fellini. Is the self-mockery implicit in Polanski's own performance as a "horrible dwarf" lacerating or merely an ego trip? How far is the incredible stupidity of the gorgeous heroine (Sydne Rome) intended to be beguiling, and how far repulsive? The grotesque sexual eccentricities are not merely silly, they're squalidly exploitative; they're also conducive to nothing, only a long-term impotence. If all this sounds depressing, it's worth stating that the film is enormously funny, as long as no one lets the Amalfi sunshine cloud awareness of the black Polanski vision.

Pierre Greenfield

Loose Ends. On the international film festival circuit for the last two years, *Loose Ends* is probably destined to wind up in the back pages of a 16mm rental catalogue. A pity, too, since this first feature by David Burton Morris and Victoria Wozniak captures with amazing clarity and absolutely no self-indulgence the sense and sensibility of Mid-Western blue collar life. The desperations, frustrations, the unrealized and undefined dreams of two young men, workers in an auto shop, are brilliantly explored. At first I was somewhat disconcerted by the film's dreary accuracy. Billy, a likeable, footloose fellow and his pal Eddie, head of a typically strained lower-middle-class family, cavort through a desultory series of work-days, misadventures, and family arguments, their lives shaped and defined by gin mills, beer cans, junk foods, burnt meatloaf dinners, 'good times.' Yet as the details accumulate, the film illuminates the grey truths the heroes face, the consolation of two, however abysmal, choices in their lives. An ironic use of back lighting, usually reserved for more romantically inclined films, suggests the filmmakers' affection for their subject instead of the usual derisive and condescending attitude that informs other films of this type. And beneath the gritty surface of *Loose Ends* lurks a forceful and impressive critique of American society.

Steve Perdios

FILM AS BUSINESS

MICHAEL MAYER

The Rating System

Some eight years ago under the aegis of the Motion Picture Association, the National Association of Theatre Owners and the International Film Importers and Distributors of America, a voluntary rating system was established for motion pictures being distributed in the United States. The system involved classification in one of four categories: "G" for general audiences with all ages admitted, "PG" (originally "M"), parental guidance suggested, "R", restricted, persons under 17 requiring accompanying parent or guardian, and "X", under 17 not admitted, subject to age variations in certain areas.

Sufficient time has now expired for fair judgment to be rendered on the system. It is my opinion that it has been effective in holding back substantive governmental interference with films, that it has permitted and broadened free expression on the screen, and that it has served as a reasonable guide to parents for appropriate film fare for their youngsters.

I should first reveal my prejudices. For many years prior to its inception, I favored a voluntary system of classification on the very grounds above set forth as the best method of dealing with problems arising from difficult film content and changing mores. I have served as a member of the Advisory Panel and on the Appeals Board of the rating system which permits modification of ratings in cases that are on appeal. So I speak as a part of the system as well as a partisan in favor of it.

Essentially I see the system as an intelligent guide to film fare for youngsters at a time when filmmakers have been reaching for constantly more daring and explosive themes. Without some self-control it seems to me that this trend—with which I am by no means personally in complete sympathy (particularly in the areas of explicit violence and sex)—would inevitably bring a strong demand for governmental censorship and restraint. We had that system with the old and unlamented State Censorship Boards and local controls, so prevalent until curbed by judicial action in the sixties. The unfortunate effects of the censorship system are there, as any veteran of the trade or the many lawsuits these practices provoked can testify.

It is true that the courts, and in particular the Warren Supreme Court, played the major role in undermining the pernicious practices of State censorship that played such a major role in restraining screen content. But it should not be overlooked that the courts' personnel has changed and that the decisions of the 1960s may no longer hold sway in this difficult era. If we are to get prior restraint censorship back again in quantity, who is to say with assurance that this Court will reject it?

"It must always be emphasized that "X" merely means a film is not for minors but for an adult audience—and that does not necessarily mean that a film is bad or evil or corrupt."

There are of course other governmental controls that cause concern. We still have customs regulations and obscenity laws with enforcements varying from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. The Supreme Court in 1973 allowed broad leeway to prosecutors to act against what they perceived as obscenity under local laws—and some are taking full advantage of it. A failure of the rating system would, in my view, accelerate this danger.

Obviously ratings are no complete solution. There are difficult problems in enforcement of any voluntary system. Mistakes are made by the rating administration. As I see it, the rule that four-letter sexual words cannot be rated other than "R" or "X" is erroneous and calls for a more liberal construction. Appeals have so held in several cases. "X" ratings have caused serious problems with advertising restrictions and audience limitations, and I still feel that a less negative symbol (such as "A" for adults) would have been preferable. It must always be emphasized that "X" merely means a film is not for minors but for an adult audience—and that does not necessarily mean that a film is bad or evil or corrupt.

The challenge of graphic and extreme violence in films has already resulted in more restrictive ratings on this type of material. There are "X's" for violence as well as explicit sex and other adult themes. The rating system is not an answer to all the industry's problems, but it is a helpful guide which classifies without censoring (unless one takes the extraordinary view that the barring of minors from a theatre constitutes censorship.)

Certainly there is room for improvement. There are very few areas of human activity in which there is not. Suggestions have been made that the symbols should be expanded to indicate the reasons for particular ratings. Perhaps a broader public participation is needed for Appeals Board determinations.

But none of the proposed changes go to the essence. To protect the film industry against overzealous prosecutors, to inform parents and young people, and to allow the fullest and freest expression possible on the screen, a rating system remains imperative. ●

Michael Mayer is a partner in the New York theatrical law firm of Mayer & Bucher. He has authored numerous articles and books on motion pictures, most recently *Film Industries—Practical Business Legal Problems in Production, Distribution and Exhibition*, published by Hastings House, N.Y.

COFFEE, BRANDY & CIGARS

HERMAN WEINBERG

At last a new film I can recommend— *The Gentleman Tramp*—on the life of Chaplin, a compilation film made up of bits and pieces of his films, his and Oona's private films, newsreels, intimate, candid footage and the like—as if his book, *My Life in Pictures,* had suddenly come to life. Bert Schneider is one of the prime names connected with this touching work. But nobody seems to be showing it—pornography is what they're showing. That's what the public wants.

Liam O'Leary tells me (if I remember him right) that when he visited Alice Terry in Los Angeles in connection with his book on her former husband, director Rex Ingram, she was delighted at the prospect and even joked about meeting Ingram for the first time, when he asked her if she wouldn't like to come to his flat to see his etchings. "Oh, Rex," she laughed, "you're not going to pull that old chestnut on *me,* are you?" "And you know what?" she continued, "I went—and found that he really *did* have etchings—and good ones, too." Soon after they were married.

There is a perfectly charming photo of the two of them in Anthony Slide's endearing new book, *Idols of Silence*—a book for film buffs with a nostalgia for "the good old days" of silent movies.

Said Eisenstein to a colleague after meeting James Joyce in 1930, "That fellow really *does* what all of us *want* to do."

King Vidor, in *Wild Oranges,* returns to show the paper blowing idly in the wind after it has frightened the horse drawing the buggy (the girl is thrown from it and killed). Two years later Eisenstein, in *Potemkin,* returns to show the tarpaulin fluttering idly in the wind on the cruiser's deck after the sailors under it throw it off when the firing squad refuses to shoot them. Both nuances are good—but Vidor did it first.

Vidor also showed childhood vignettes of Jim Apperson in *The Big Parade* when his mother first sees him home from the war without a leg, but this time, beautiful as the moment is, Vidor was antedated some five years by Pierce Benoit in the latter's novel, *L'Atlantide,* when Saint-Avit reflects on Mohrange's youth after he has fatally struck him, his best friend, on the jealous Antinea's command.

There was a Hollywood film (was it *Father of the Bride*?—I don't remember) where the father (was it Spencer Tracy?), before he gives his daughter away in marriage to another man, does the Romeo-Juliet balcony love scene with her—one of the loveliest moments in all Hollywood's years. Hollywood, thou wert fair once... What happened?

How quick (read: impatient) we are to label this or that new X-rated film "an artistic break-through for sexuality on the screen" (as if the "artistry" with which it is allegedly done justifies its pornographic content and is the reason we go to see it). Thus do we rationalize our prejudice in favor of what we once used to call just plain dirty films. A few years ago it was *Last Tango in Paris* that was the "break-through," last year, *Exhibition,* and this year, *In the Realm of the Senses.* Look what Pasolini did to *The Decameron* under the pretense that he was filming this great classic. He turned it into the kind of movie they show in brothels to while away the time for the customer until the next girl is ready. Here stands this huge figure, Boccaccio, at the dawn of so many things, directly or indirectly bulking vast in the intellectual landscape that Chaucer and Shakespeare inhabit... yet to most of us no more than a vaguely improper raconteur... and to Pasolini not even that, just plain *merde.*

Orson Welles blames the late Irving Thalberg for corrupting Hollywood (the old Hollywood, the new Hollywood is beyond corruption): "The minute Thalberg came to power, he was the biggest enemy of motion pictures that ever lived. That's when the big desk came into being and a man sat behind it whose only function was to interfere with the man making a movie. Unless you own your own desk, you're in trouble."

"A person who goes to the movies in the afternoon comes out feeling depraved." (Welles)

Did you know that Peter Lorre's real name was Laszlo Lowenstein and that it was when he was seen by Fritz Lang playing a comic role on the stage in Berlin that Lang knew he had found the psychopathic sex kill for his *M*...?

André Maurois delivered a eulogy at the death of Stefan Zweig, who, he said, "did not have the guts to claw his way into the barred shelter of the United States when the refugees from Hitler sought this shelter." (As a result, Zweig committed suicide in South America.) The immigration quota kept out many such desperate fugitives. "Many men of feeling," he said, "must have meditated on the responsibility, which is our own, for a civilization that could create a world in which a man like Stefan Zweig could not live."

Welles' point in his diatribe about "the man behind the big desk" is, alas, only too well taken. One of the latest victims of this kind of interference is Vincente Minelli, whose most recent film, *A Matter of Time,* was recut ass-backward by the "producers," e.g. the money-men.

Nunally Johnson, who once said, "Where I come from down South, the Tobacco Road people are the country club set," once told Harold Ross, editor of *The New Yorker,* that he'd like to review motion pictures for the magazine. "For God's sake, why?" Ross demanded. "Movies are for old ladies and fairies." "Ross had early conceived a violent dislike of movies," reports James Thurber in his *The Years With Ross,* "and hoped his cinema critics would have at them with cudgels. His feeling was moderated somewhat after he saw *Public Enemy* and *Viva Villa*."

Jean Renoir is one of the very few film directors of whom one can say, as Thomas Mann said of Pablo Casals, "Here is a man whom irony cannot touch."

The pandemic of pornography has even reached the classics, new "versions" of *Alice in Wonderland, Cinderella* and *The Wizard of Oz* being X-rated films.

Ozep's *Der Moerder Karamazov,* with Anna Sten as Grushenka and Fritz Kortner as Dmitri, has a delicious moment when the young Karamazov berates her, "An eighteen-year-old girl carrying on like you do with men—" "Seventeen!" cries out Grushenka, who doesn't want to be thought older than she is.

Did you know that Warner Oland, famous for playing Charlie Chan in numberless dim-wit movies, was Swedish and that his real name was Werner Ohlund? He'd been playing Chinamen since 1917 in the serial *Patria.* He translated Strindberg into English. Only Sternberg rescued him from the vapid roles Hollywood offered him, giving him intelligent roles in *Dishonored* and *Shanghai Express,* just as Sternberg was the only director to give Larry Semon a straight role (instead of Hollywood's asinine roles for him) in *Underworld.*

Thoughts in relation to the silent films of yesteryear which were, through a technological fluke, transformed into talking films—"Be silent or let thy words be more than silence." (Pythagoras) "We are less convinced by what we hear than by what we see." (Herodotus) "Cinema is the language of images and images don't speak." (Pirandello)

The recent passing of Fritz Lang makes the appearance of the long awaited biography of him by Lotte Eisner all the more welcome. It has been in work since the late Sixties. An English translation of the original French edition has finally been completed. A must for all serious film aficionados, obviously.

And while on the subject of books, now that *The Lubitsch Touch* is out of print, I hope the same serious film aficionados will take note that a completely revised and expanded edition (the third to date), with 125 rare illustrations, most of which have hitherto been unpublished, will appear next summer via Dover Publications, New York. And if your local bookshop's film-book shelves seem to stock principally tomes titled "The Films of Alice Faye" and "The Films of Shirley Temple," besides "Hollywood Babylon" and "Sex in the Cinema," remember that copies of *The Complete 'Wedding March' of Erich von Stroheim,* which are rarely seen in such proximity in bookshops (most bookshops being no different from most movie houses), may be ordered direct from the publishers, Little Brown & Co., 34 Beacon St., Boston, Mass. 02106—$19.95 postpaid.

One would have thought, after *The 400 Blows,* Truffaut's first and still best film, that another film about children by him would be as unerring in its veracity, would have something of the irresistible charm of what Victor Hugo saw in them when he said in his "Art of Being a Grandfather"—"Children have a way of making me go crazy. I adore them and I am a fool." The film is *Small Change* (*L'argent de pôche*). It has a kind of veracity, tiny twinklings of charm, but a *400 Blows* it is not, nor a *Forbidden Games,* not even a *Red Balloon* (that exquisite

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Born in New York in 1908, **Herman G. Weinberg** first studied the violin, then arranged music for silent foreign films, and eventually subtitled over 400 French, German, Italian and other films. He began writing about films in 1929, and has contributed articles to most of the world's leading film journals, served on the juries of various film festivals, been U.S. correspondent for *Sight & Sound* as well as *Cahiers du Cinéma* and published several books on the cinema, the most recent of which is *The Complete Wedding March* (Little, Brown). Dwight Macdonald has called Herman Weinberg "the Boswell of the movies."

short of the late Albert Lamorisse, in which he starred his little son). Children comprise a subject I know something about and I know what I'm saying. Another film about children, though more correctly, about a child, is the Spanish *Spirit of the Beehive* (*El Espiritu de la Colmena*) by a hitherto unheard of director, one Victor Erice, and "starring" an absolutely adorable 9-year-old charmer, Ana Torrent. It took three years for this film to be noticed and acted upon and it is so perfect that it does that rarest of rare things in the movies, it makes one wonder what else is left for such a director to do after bringing this ineffable work to a close. I have not seen any film about a child that "threw me" as this one did since Chaplin's *The Kid*—and that was a long time ago. You'd better see it.

I opened this column with Chaplin and I close with him. His art, incomparable, encompassed it all. Truffaut, himself, says of Chaplin's *A Dog's Life* and other such two-reelers of his, "for me they are the most beautiful films in the world... Chaplin means more to me than the idea of God."

P.S. I hope I don't have to urge you not to miss the new Marcel Ophul's documentary, *The Memory of Justice.* I cannot improve on what David Denby said of it in *The New York Times*—"If human history is seen as filth—one period and episode as utterly vile as the next, from the Crusades to Vietnam—then there is no defense against total cynicism, no particular reason to resist totalitarianism. Ophuls' attempt to view our recent history with some measure of lucidity is itself a stand against despair." Then, after you see it, open your evening newspaper and look at the swill being offered by the movie ads—by at least nine-tenths of the movie ads. That is the measure of them.

It is one of the virtues of Peter Bogdanovich's *Nickelodeon* that it is among the one-tenth that are risking their investment by not pandering to the gaping primates who are making incredible fortunes for the producers of *Jaws*, both *Godfathers*, *King Kong*, etc. *The New York Times* (not Canby) could review it without a single mention of the lovely note on which the film closes, from the sudden premiere of a new kind of film, different from the slapstick of the first movie years, a picture called *The Clansmen*, made by a fellow named Griffith. and the starry-eyed drive into the night of the slapstick crew afterwards, where, in the middle of the night and in the middle of nowhere, a brightly-lit glass pavilion confronts them where they are making sound films—an echo of the poetic round-up close of Fellini's *8½*. The plot of *Nickelodeon*, as Judith Crist pointed out, does indeed defy description, but no matter. It's been worth sitting through all that "maniacally frantic" slapstick (with the help of Tatum O'Neal, of course) for that sweet ending. My, oh my, we seem almost to have forgotten that "ol' magic" the movies were once capable of and which Bogdanovich so touchingly now reminds us of.

I have just learned that Henri Langlois died suddenly in Paris. No one worked harder than he to preserve that "ol' magic," no one loved the cinema more than he, no one was more "keeper of the flame" than he. I have lost a good friend, as many others have, but the cinema has lost, in a real sense, almost its reason for being. Who will look after it now? Who will care that much? ●

PARIS LETTER

GEOFFREY MINISH

"Gabin Le Magnifique"

Early in November, a few days before Jean Gabin died, a three-week retrospective entitled "Gabin Le Magnifique" opened on the fringe of the second Paris Film Festival. Most of the selections were pre-Second World War, which prompted a critic in one Paris daily to remind us that Gabin had not always been the monolithic patriarch whom the French had flocked to see over the past two decades. In the 1930s, the critic pointed out, Gabin was regarded, in France and abroad, as the screen's incarnation of proletarian revolt. The reminder should have been unnecessary, but most French moviegoers are too young to remember the pre-war Gabin, and in recent years films from his classic period have been scarce in Paris art houses, certainly in comparison with Bogart revivals.

It was, after all, Bogart, not Gabin, with whom Jean-Paul Belmondo identified in *Breathless*. The post-war Gabin was an immensely popular actor, but unfashionable with the *cinéphiles*. This was not simply a case of snobbishly dismissing a star worshipped by the mass public. For one thing, Gabin's age was against him. In France as elsewhere, film buffs tend to be young, and it wasn't easy to respond to that wooden, jowly old face steamrollering through films that were decidedly *Ancienne Vague*. (Indeed, even with ordinary moviegoers, Gabin may not have been as great an idol as is generally assumed. Three of his biggest hits— *Mélodie en sous-sol*, *Le Clan des Siciliens*, and *Deux hommes dans la ville*, had Alain Delon as co-star.) There was also the political aspect. Like the old *Cahiers du Cinéma* gang, who checklisted Hitchcock's film of *Juno and the Paycock* as depicting "a bunch of degenerates in a Dublin slum," French film critics, with certain exceptions, have been, and are, left-wing. Gabin, as he switched from Maigret to Godfather-type gangster to high court judge, was seen as an embodiment of the right-wing authoritarianism that poisons French society. (A Robespierre-like Gabin, I am sure, would have been acceptable.) Nor was he given much credit for the achievements of his "proletarian" days. Politically, he had sold out, and on the aesthetic level, *Cahiers* hatchetmen like Truffaut had effectively discredited the French directors of the Thirties, apart from Vigo and Renoir. Of Gabin's Renoir films, people usually remember *La Grande Illusion*, where he was outshone by Stroheim and Fresney, rather than *La Bête humaine*, that supreme *film noir*, in which Gabin gave perhaps his finest performance.

How good an actor was he? It's always a tricky question, because so much depends on age and physique. In *Julius Caesar*, John Gielgud virtually wiped the screen with Marlon Brando. But who could imagine Gielgud as Stanley Kowalski? A great actor gives us an enhanced sense of our own humanity and in that respect, I suppose, Gabin was surpassed by Raimu. But at his best, Gabin was the most magnetic actor the screen has known.

"But whatever kind of film he was in, he dominated the screen, as three-dimensional as a Cézanne apple."

I say at his best. In Marc Allegret's charming *Zouzou* (1934), a vehicle for Josephine Baker, Gabin is almost instantly forgettable. It was Julien Duvivier who discerned that Gabin, despite his music-hall background, had the makings of a great tragedian. Or at least, Duvivier usually gets the credit for this. However, the critic Claude Gauteur pointed out in the trade weekly *Film Français* that as early as 1931 Gabin portrayed a character who wound up a suicide, thereby anticipating his fate in *Pépé Le Moko*, *La Bête humaine*, and *Le Jour se lève*. (The film in question, *Pour un soir*, is lost. Its director was one Jean Godard. Other directors with whom Gabin worked in the early 1930s include Jacques and Maurice Tourneur, Auguste Genina, Anatole Litvak, and G.W. Pabst.) Still, it is in 1934, when he made his first three films with Duvivier, that the Gabin legend really begins. In view of Gabin's subsequent Popular Front image, it may be worth noting that one of the films was *La Bandera*, in which Gabin played a Spanish legionnaire. The film is usually classified as right-wing. Another of the films was *Golgotha*, with Gabin as Pontius Pilate.

Duvivier was the kind of director who does not make great films, but can create unforgettable screen moments: the gangster Louis Jouvet, in *Un Carnet de bal*, reciting Verlaine to Marie Bell before the police take him away; the murder in *Pépé Le Moko*, of the police informer Charpin as he crouches terrified beside a jangling player piano. *Pépé Le Moko* is one of those trashy movies, like *Casablanca*, that get through to you despite yourself. Gabin's suicide is a masterly piece of tearjerking: the trapped gangster watching as the liner with the woman he loves aboard pulls slowly away from the dock, the shriek of the ship's siren drowning out his call to her, the abrupt gesture with which he stabs himself. Yet unlike *Quai des brumes*, where the dying Gabin tells Michèle Morgan, in good Prévertese, "Embrasse-moi, je suis pressé," there is no poeticising of death—Gabin's eyes even cross slightly as the blade enters his heart.

In contrast, Gabin's suicide in *La Bête humaine* is one of the film's few weak points. Outlined against the sky as he prepares to jump off the cab of his railroad engine, Gabin looks more like a model for a Socialist-Realist painting than a man about to take his own life. It's Renoir doing a bad imitation of Eisenstein. Otherwise, his direction of

Geoff Minish is a Canadian journalist working for *Agence France Presse* in Paris. He is our Paris correspondent.

Jean Gabin in **The Upper Hand** (1966).

Gabin is superb. Gabin had a face that was both sculptured and porcine, depending on the angle from which it was viewed, and Renoir used this contrast to express the split in the psyche of Jacques Lantier (Gabin), a decent man with a murderous streak stemming from bad heredity. One of the film's most telling scenes is a minor one: the train has arrived in Le Havre, and Lantier, the driver, affectionately caresses the engine. This is not phallic symbolism, but an indication that Lantier is a good workman, proud of his skill. When, in the contemporary cinema, did we last see a film with a worker as a hero? Endowed, moreover, with a dignity that our entire economic structure is designed to obliterate? To a limited extent, at least, films like *La Bête humaine* and *Le Jour se lève* were politically revolutionary, even though they ended in tragedy, like their decade.

After France fell, and an unrewarding stint in Hollywood (Gabin wasn't comfortable acting in English), he joined the Free French. When the war ended he found, like many another veteran, that he wasn't wanted. He was past 40 and the French cinema was looking for youth, which turned out to be Gérard Philipe. It wasn't until 1953, when Jacques Becker managed to convince his producers that Gabin would be ideal for Max, the middle-aged gangster hero of *Touchez pas au grisbi*, that Gabin reconquered his public.

It has been suggested that Gabin's difficulties in making a comeback explain why he played it safe when choosing roles in the latter part of his career. But whatever kind of film he was in, he dominated the screen, as three-dimensional as a Cézanne apple. Sometimes, too, there would be a touch of his former greatness, as in his penultimate film, André Cayatte's *Verdict* (1974). Cast as a judge with a crippled wife to whom he is devoted, Gabin conveys a sadness that has nothing to do with the rheumy-eyed petulance of old age. The judge is a man with an unhealed wound inside him, and so it was, I believe, with Gabin himself.

I haven't left much space for the Paris festival, which was better organised this year than last year's inaugural festival, but less interesting. A big disappointment was Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Chinese Roulette*. Adulterous couples at a weekend houseparty earnestly playing a ferocious truth-or-consequences game master-minded by the crippled small daughter of one of the couples. There is a lot of arch posing by the actors, as though Fassbinder was aiming his film at the structuralist critics. I hope they enjoy it.

André Téchiné, another ex- *Cahiers* critic, gave us *Barocco*, starring Gérard Depardieu and Isabelle Adjani, an actress who seems determined to out-sulk even Jeanne Moreau. The film is a kind of political parable, with gangster overtones, set in the sleazier areas of Amsterdam. At least, I think the film is political: Téchiné in his program notes describes it as "a criminal fairy tale." French critics have compared Téchiné here to Fritz Lang, but Téchiné has none of Lang's gift for creating suspense. The film is, in fact, stupefyingly dull.

Honor was saved, as the French say, by Volker Schlöndorff's *Der Fangschuss*, screened at the festival as *Le Coup de grâce*, following the title of the Marguerite Yourcenar novella on which the film is based. The setting is the Baltic states at the end of the First World War, with German troops fighting Bolshevik partisans. Sensibly, the film is made in black-and-white instead of color. It's the story of doomed love on the part of a woman aristocrat (Schlöndorff's wife, Margaretha von Trotta) for a fanatically dedicated German officer (Matthias Habich) who rejects von Trotta because, it turns out, he is homosexual. She goes over to the partisans, is captured, and executed—at her own request—by the man she loved. Schlöndorff does something I doubt any contemporary Hollywood director would have the nerve to do: he films the execution almost casually, in a brief long shot. A beautiful, haunting film, as well as a devastating critique of the so-called military mentality. ●

DISH NIGHT

WALDO LYDECKER

ANXIETY I: Insiders who have seen Woody Allen's mysterious new movie (in which he co-stars with Diane Keaton, Carol Kane, and Marshall McLuhan) have said that it was just as much a mystery after they saw it. Woody is re-cutting.

GOING LEGIT: Some movie names will be going the Broadway route this year. Marty Scorsese is set to make his debut as a stage director with Liza Minnelli's new show, sometimes called "In Person" and sometimes called "Nightclub." What is agreed upon is that it is thematically somewhere between *Cabaret* and The Judy Garland Story. Frank (*David & Lisa / Rancho DeLuxe*) Perry will direct Estelle Parsons in Paul Zindel's *Ladies of the Alamo*, which is being produced by Edgar Bronfman, the father of the now-you-see-him-now-you-don't boy, Sam Bronfman. Finally, Jacques Demy is coming over from Paris to restage a revival of everybody's favorite sentimental musical, *Les Parapluies de Cherbourg*, possibly starring Yasmin Khan, the daughter of Rita Hayworth and the Aly Khan.

PAPER STARS: Hitting the autoblography trail this month with dish from their own pasts are Howard Hughes' favorite underwear model, Jane Russell, and Eddie ("Oh Mein Papa") Fisher. They've both signed contracts with major publishers to spill their guts, and we've heard that Eddie plans to go easy on Liz but will cream Debbie.

"STAR"-STRUCK: Kris and Rita Kristofferson zoomed out of the Hollywood premiere of *A Star is Born* as soon as Barbra Streisand and her Jon Peters made their entrance.

ANXIETY II: Elaine May managed to keep her cool at the New York screening of her *Mikey and Nicky* (at the Hollywood screening a week before, she had last-minute doubts and just as the projectionist was about to roll, rushed up the aisle in an ill-fated attempt to give it one last polish) by not showing up. Peter Bogdanovich and Cybill Shepherd did, along with Carl Bernstein (with his Mrs., Nora Ephron) and Peter Falk.

WEAR ME: The promotional T-shirts for Mae West's movie *Sextette* will be designed by none other than the surreal signor, Salvador Dali.

PEC HYPE: All of that hanging out at Elaine's finally paid off for Arnold Schwarzenegger. At the premiere of his starring vehicle *Pumping Iron*, all sorts of Manhattan beautiful people showed up, including Tony and Berry Perkins, Jennifer O'Neill with John Revson (of the Fire and Ice line) and a gaggle of Warhol types, led by their empress, Paulette Goddard. They were all rounded up, no doubt, by Arnold's prime mover in New York, Delfina Rattazzi (of the Fiat line), who is Jackie O's assistant at Viking Press, in the former First Lady's new incarnation as editress.

SPEEDING BULLET: It looks as if Sylvester Stallone will flex them as Superman.

RE-CYCLED: Add to the list of remakes in the planning stage *Old Acquaintance*, *Saratoga Trunk*, and another twenty million dollar number from Dino DeLaurentiis based on the oldie *Hurricane*, the picture in which Dorothy Lamour had her sarong blown off.

FILMS NOIR: Joel Schumacher, that Nice Jewish Boy from Long Island who got his start decorating windows at Bendel's and went on to script *Sparkle* and *Carwash*, is continuing in the same vein by having just gotten the assignment to do the screenplay for the movie version of *The Wiz*, to star Diana Ross under Sidney Lumet's direction. ●

LONDON LETTER

ROBERT MCDONALD

Censorship in the Open

Traditionally censors practice their dastardly art in deepest darkest secrecy. But the British Board of Film Censors, under its new secretary James Ferman, has begun to let in a little light with a bulletin published each month to explain the thinking that has gone into its certifications.

The bulletin summarizes each film submitted to the Board, gives its certification, notes whether cuts were necessary to achieve that rating, lists the duration of total cuts, and tries to explain why they were felt to be necessary. It does not itemize the deletions, although they frequently emerge in the course of the commentary. Films the Board feels it cannot certify are treated at some length in an appendix to each issue, and Ferman in an introduction discusses recent legal decisions pertinent to the practice of censorship as well as trends in filmmaking which he feels could have a bearing on future decisions. For example, Ferman has commented repeatedly on the increased incidence of films employing themes of rape and revenge.

"It is a censorship critique not a film critique," says Ferman. "The discussion of the film doesn't imply praise or blame. These are simply the considerations that were taken into account in deciding whether to request deletions."

Ferman, an American who has lived in Britain for the past 25 years and who has only been with the Board for one year, says he implemented the bulletin because he wanted to get away from "censorship by secrecy." Also he says he is "sick and tired of being accused of cutting twenty minutes when we cut three and the distributor cut the rest."

Britain has a two-tier censorship system. The BBFC is a voluntary industry-backed body which sets a "national advisory standard." Statutory control rests with municipal governments under 1952 legislation which requires them to set standards for children, and under a 1909 act which gives them discretionary powers to "set conditions" for the showing of films. Originally this latter law was intended to allow local governments to set safety standards for movie houses, though judicial rulings have interpreted this to mean that local governments can also "set conditions" about content. Ordinarily the BBFC ruling is accepted at the local level, though each municipality can deviate either way.

"When we refuse to certificate a film we don't necessarily think it is not a good film," says Ferman, "but we don't think it would be suitable throughout the country. Tastes in London, Manchester and Birmingham are very different than in Cornwall and the Hebrides. The bulletins are an attempt to explain our decisions to local authorities across the country. We're not trying to provide any advance warning. We're simply trying to keep them informed of the complete world range of product and what criteria we are using in classifying it."

The two-tier system has, until recently, operated quite satisfactorily because of its flexibility. The BBFC has a reputation for being reasonable, and communities with more liberal attitudes, London in particular, have always had the right to certificate films refused by the Board. But neither a Board nor a local government certificate protects a film from the law and the possibility of charges of obscenity or indecency. The obscenity test is whether a work tends to deprave and corrupt, while indecency is defined as being "shocking, disgusting and revolting," or alternatively as "offending recognized standards of propriety." Obscenity is deemed an issue of morals; indecency is one of manners.

Since 1973, moral rearmament campaigners led by the Festival of Light — Mary Whitehouse, Malcolm Muggeridge, et al — have seized upon their right under the Common Law to prosecute films as indecent and to seek restraints on their presentation. Several prosecutions have been brought and, though they've not been particularly successful, the threat of expensive court proceedings has made distributors cautious.

The Law Commission has recently recommended that manners should no longer be subject to judicial control and that films should be brought within the scope of the Obscene Publications Act where morality is the only issue. A charge of obscenity presently allows defenses based on context and the contention of "the public good." The Law Commission recommendation is endorsed both by the trade and by the BBFC, who also argue that charges should be brought only on the authorization of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Robert McDonald is a Canadian journalist currently based in London.

In the meantime, exhibitors say they are opposed to Ferman's bulletin and particularly to the explanations of why a film has been refused a certificate, because they can prejudice a local Viewing Committee. Also, exhibitors argue that the bulletin draws too much attention to their product at an already difficult time. "So far as adults are concerned no local authority is under any statutory obligation to veto films," says Robert Camplin, secretary of the Cinematograph Exhibitors Associaton of Great Britain and Ireland. "The more that is written and done by the BBFC, the more likely they are to prompt local authorities to interfere." In an early issue (January, 1976), Ferman set out the major concerns of the BBFC: sex, violence, nudity and language, and he wrote "in each of these areas there has been a considerable evolution of cinematic standards recently on a world wide basis.

"Only a very small proportion of the films we see each year are British, and thus we are constantly attempting to regulate the productions of other cultures by the standards of our own."

The bulletin reveals the Board to be particularly concerned about violence, especially when it is juxtaposed with sexual images. "There is evidence," writes Ferman, "that the combination of sex and violence may have an unhealthy influence on some members of an audience, and the Board has always exercised control over such material even where it is not covered by the criminal law."

Ferman is particularly exercised about the "fashionable and exploitable theme" of rape and revenge which has figured prominently in recent releases. *Lipstick* lost 53½ seconds of "sadistically tantalising detail," and *Trackdown* 46 seconds of "protracted display of detailed viciousness" in which "sexual pleasure was implicit in the violence itself."

Mutilation is generally taboo, and the Japanese film *Violated Angels*, which juxtaposes the sadistic butchery of several nurses with documentary shots of soldiers in action, was refused a certificate despite a recognition of "the Japanese pre-occupation with emotion translated into ritual" and the fact that the violence is "deliberately controlled" and "muted visually." Yet *Taxi Driver*, with its shot-off fingers and hunting knife hackings, was certified X (no one under 18 admitted) with no cuts on the grounds that it is "one of those rare films whose power depends on excess, on violence that appalls..."

As a matter of policy the Board cuts maiming blows from films like Kung Fu movies, and any weapon that can be easily copied or is readily obtainable is also eliminated when possible.

Even so, Ferman says the Board won't take national responsibility for extreme examples of violence such as *Violated Angels* or *Texas Chain Saw Massacre*. "We say [to the municipal governments] you take the decision locally and you carry the can to the electorate at the next election."

With regard to violence, it wouldn't be England if there weren't concern for animals. The Cinematograph Films (Animals) Act 1937 disallows the showing of any film "if it includes a scene in the making of which cruelty to animals has taken place." The RSPCA has been consulted in several instances and, though most films including Borau's *Furtivos* in which a wolf is battered to death with an axe, and *The Sailor who fell from Grace with the Sea* in which a cat is vivisected have been passed as simulations, Italy's *Savage Man, Savage Beast*, a successor to *Mondo Cane*, lost 2'35" since certain cruelties "would not have taken place without the collusion of the filmmakers."

Ferman is a great believer in the evolution of tastes. Recently the Board suggested that films certificated before 1965 might be resubmitted because they might contain cuts "which bear no relation to today's standards." *Rebel Without a Cause* was considered again and had all its cuts restored. Many of these had been in scenes portraying "anti-social or rebellious behaviour" particularly "where they reflected discredit on the hero's parents."

Ferman sees his bulletins as a "kind of archive of social history" which should prove invaluable to scholars of later generations as a guide to changing tastes and mores.

In this respect the policy of opening up the censor's views to the scrutiny of the public could eventually lead to the liberalization of censorship regulations.

Ferman hopes that that will be the case. "The social history of our times," he said in his judgment on *Rebel*, "is written to a large extent in films and television, reflecting the customs and preoccupations of a wide popular audience and offering them back again as glamorized models for behaviour. The extent to which censorship can or should interfere with this normal process of mass culture will always be debatable, but it seems advisable to limit such control to areas where the behaviour patterns endorsed by the film can actually be seen, as in some forms of violence, to be socially harmful." ●

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BOOKS

News

Of interest to filmmakers: Film Finance Publishing Co. (P.O. Box 2022, New York, N.Y. 10017; 212-238-4497) has brought out a 56-page book entitled *Fortune in Films* designed to help independent filmmakers understand the intricacies of film financing. We have no information here as to price, unfortunately. Distinctly free, on the other hand, is a subscription to *The MPL Recorder*, a series of newsletters on various aspects of the film business (the most recent edition was entitled "How to Survive as a Filmmaker"). Contact Motion Picture Laboratories Inc., Box 1758, Memphis, TN 38101 (901-774-4944) and tell them we sent you.

Of interest to screenwriters: Ross Reports Television writes to say that *that* is their name (not Monthly Talent and Script Report, as erroneously reported on page 44 of our last issue). An introductory 6-month subscription is available (from Television Index Inc., 150 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011; 212-924-0320) at $8.10 ($7.50, if you live outside New York). And now, another periodical has appeared in the field: It's *The Scriptwriter* ($10 for a 3-month trial), a monthly market survey - craft guide, written and edited by the members of the Writers Guild of America, West. Order from: *The Scriptwriter*, P.O. Box 1941, Hollywood, CA 90028.

Of interest to teachers: The Education Liaison Office of the American Film Institute (Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C. 20566) is offering — free — copies of a chart that lists 28 commonly-used film textbooks, comparing each of them in terms of format, level, range of coverage, timeliness, approach to theory and use of illustrations. And, The National Film Information Service (a public service of The Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences) offers — by mail — access to the 9000 books, pamphlets, periodicals, etc. relating to some 40,000 films. Answers to specific research questions, copies of stills (at a reasonable $5 apiece), rental sources for films, program notes, and specific Research Guides on such subjects as Frank Capra, Women Directors and British Cinema are just some of the many services offered. For further information, get in touch with Anthony Slide, The National Film Information Service, 8949 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90211 (213-278-8990). Mention *Take One* and earn our undying gratitude.

New publications: Booklegger Press (555 29th Street, San Francisco, CA 94131; 415-647-9074) has brought out a 168-page paperback entitled *Positive Images: A Unique Guide to Non-Sexist Media*, which provides carefully-researched information on over 400 films, videotapes, slide shows and filmstrips that actively challenge sex role stereotypes. ($5.00 prepaid, $5.50 if invoiced).

Ciné-Tracts is the name of a new periodical which plans to be a fairly serious journal of film "dealing with theory and history and the inter-relationships between culture, communications and politics." More info from Ron Burnett, *Ciné-Tracts*, 4227 Esplanade Avenue, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2W 1T1.

Cinebooks, 692a Yonge Street, Toronto, M4Y 2A6 have produced a handsome, perfect bound, 260 page catalogue that makes a handy, bibliographic reference work as well as providing a source for some difficult-to-obtain material. The books are divided into more than 80 categories which are listed in a table of contents. The catalogue may be obtained from the Toronto store or from the newly opened Vancouver branch at 570 Granville St., Vancouver B.C. V6C 1W6

We've received copies of a new quarterly called *Film Criticism*. Among other pieces in the first two issues were: Gerald Mast on the AFI, Martin Walsh on "Structural Ambiguity in the Films of Eric Rohmer", interviews with Jeff Corey, and with the women who edited Adele H.'s diaries and, best of all, an article/ obituary on Hans Richter.

America's Nontheatrical Film Distributors Association has just published an informative brochure for film users that explains and clarifies the issues of copyright and fair use as applied to feature films in 16mm. Titled *The Film Bandit Strikes Again*, the brochure (which is available free by sending a self-addressed envelope to NFDA, 40 West 57th Street, New York, N.Y. 10019) should be of interest to media students, film programmers, librarians, teachers and others who use 16mm feature films.

Columbia Pictures and Daniel Melnick have purchased screen rights to Paddy Chayefsky's new, as-yet-untitled, novel. Meanwhile, Bill Cayton — who usually makes films of championship prize-fights — has announced his intention to make a feature film version of *The Guiness Book of World Records*. The emphasis will be on the funnier records (including the one for shallow diving — a 40-foot plunge into 12½ inches of water).

François Truffaut is preparing a book on his experience performing in front of the cameras in Steven Spielberg's forthcoming *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* — the book's to be called *Actors Wait*, or is it *Actor's Wait*.

Reviews

Leni Riefenstahl: The Fallen Film Goddess, by Glenn B. Infield. Thomas Y. Crowell Company. 1976. (Distributed in Canada by Fitzhenry & Whiteside Ltd. $11.75).

This book could be reviewed from the dustjacket, from the pictures of soft young Leni on the front, Leni with Adolph on the back. Sensationalist, rumour-mongering, insinuating, exploitative: "The intimate and shocking story of Adolph Hitler and Leni Riefenstahl," based on "a wealth of new documentation, unpublished letters, private photographs and reminiscences."

The reminiscences are with Luis Trenker, an actor who worked with Riefenstahl in Fanck's mountain films and remained close to her until he fell into disfavour with the Nazis and became very critical of Riefenstahl and her work in the Third Reich; also with Willy Zielke, a cinematographer who bitterly claims that the prologue for *Olympia* was his conception and work, never credited by Riefenstahl; Karl Ritter, a Reich film director now living in Argentina; and others. The private photographs consist of nudies from the collection of Zielke. There are photocopies of documents from the Nuremberg files (classifying Riefenstahl as a "Sympathizer"), telegrams and letters from Riefenstahl to Hitler, to Julius Streicher ("Jew-baiter number one"), and to Goebbels.

This book reveals that Hitler's rise to power in Germany brought sexual depravity, hubristic displays of military power, purges of enemies, concentration camps, mass murders of Jews, and World War II. The new documentation reveals that Riefenstahl was ambitious, accomplished, and opportunistic, that her career flourished in the Reich atmosphere, and that *Triumph of the Will* and *Olympia* benefitted from the financial and technical support of the Nazi propaganda machine.

This is all old news. What is new is Infield's yellow scholarship. He makes critical judgments about films which he hasn't seen (*Victory of Faith* (1933)and *Day of Freedom* (1935)); his analysis of *Triumph of the Will* is an uncredited paraphrase of Ken Kalman's "Propaganda as Vision" (*Film Culture*, Spring 1973); he takes it upon himself to make claims about Riefenstahl's thoughts, feelings, and motivations as statements of fact; he distorts situations and documentation to prove points. His refutations of Riefenstahl's defense of her work are the same kind of hair-splitting technicalities as her own. In many cases his arguments are downright stupid. To contradict her claim that the Nuremberg rally of 1934 was not planned solely for her cameras, for example, his outraged response is that this is ridiculous, that if someone hadn't planned the affair there would have been chaos, what with all the cars and soldiers and flags not knowing where to go or what to do.

In addition to Infield's work on Riefenstahl as a Nazi, he exploits the fact that she is a woman, with recurrent suggestions that her "great beauty, warmth, and femininity, which often swayed the opinions of strong men" were her chief resources, frequent insinuations that she screwed her way to the top — he reports with shock that she not only slept with her colleagues, but remained friends with them too — and incessant allusions to rumours about her dancing nude and worse for Hitler (all denied, by Riefenstahl and everyone who knew her, but that doesn't detract from Infield's zeal for reporting them). The chapter titled "The Woman" concerns her marriage, her lovers, rumoured affairs, the totally unverifiable suggestion that Riefenstahl is the "Walküre" referred to in Eva Braun's diary entry for the day of her second suicide attempt, and more of her relationship with Hitler ("The truth? There are of course no witnesses to anything that happened between them when the two were alone."). To give Infield his due,

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he does admit in this chapter that "her talent for filmmaking gave her an edge," but he goes on to damn her for "[using] it to advantage at all times."

His sexism leads to scholarly omissions as well, such as his unqualified assertion that "Riefenstahl is the only important woman director in the history of the cinema." His ignorance of innovators like Alice Guy Blanché, Maya Deren, Shirley Clarke, and Esther Shubb, and artists like Olga Preobrejenkaya, Nelly Kaplan, and Marguerite Duras fall beyond the realm of his obsessive interest in the Third Reich. However this does not excuse his omission of Lotte Reineger and Leontine Sagan, both important filmmakers of the time and place, both untainted by Nazi sympathies, and the latter's career ruined as a result of her anti-fascist masterpiece, *Maedchen in Uniform* (1931).

Infield sees no connection between his own sexist attitudes and the fascism he describes, nor does he seem to fully understand the philosophical and aesthetic implications of his subject. He refers to Susan Sontag's definitive article "Fascinating Fascism" (*New York Review of Books*, Feb. 6, 1975), in which she explains the relationship between Riefenstahl's early films and her later book of photographs, *The Last of the Nuba* (1975, followed this year by *The People of the Kau*): the same fascination with death rituals, fetishistic decoration, glorification of the superhuman, and inverted racism. However, Infield's sole attempt at vindication of Riefenstahl is his mention of her attention to Jesse Owens in *Olympia*, which he sees as defying Hitler's philosophy of the master race, but which Sontag explicates so convincingly to the contrary.

Riefenstahl has three feature-length films, two short documentaries, and two coffee-table books of photographs in her oeuvre. Of these, only the books and two films are widely available. Among filmmakers in general and women filmmakers, this is a minor body of work. While not wishing to denigrate Riefenstahl's influence and her brilliant artistic achievement, it remains clear to me that the primary motivation for the popular attention to Leni Riefenstahl is the continuing and escalating fascination with fascism. The attitudes which Sontag deplores in "Fascinating Fascism" are exemplified and exploited by Infield's book.

Kay Armatage

Creators of Life, by Donald Heraldson. Drake Publishers. 298pp. $14.95. (In Canada: General, $17.25).

The Great Movie Cartoon Parade, Introduction by John Halas, Notes by David Rider. Bounty Books. 120pp. $9.95.

The Fleischer Story, by Leslie Cabarga. Nostalgia Press. 184pp. $12.50. (In Canada: General, $14.50).

Animation is traditionally a realm of fantasy, the domain of the unfettered imagination, and it is apparently a desire to remain within that great tradition that animates most of its historians. *Creators of Life*, for instance, is called "A History of Animation," and as the first such item (John Culhane's and Mike Barrier's are currently in preparation) is apt to be seized upon by students, professors, and writers of film history for want of any alternative.

Well, the writing may tip them off right away: *Creators of Life* is full of the kind of sentence you expect to see at the bottom of a column in *The New Yorker*, under the heading *How's That Again?* or *Quotes We Doubt Ever Got Quoted*. On nearly every page there are classics like: "Max was now in his early 50s but he had been a pioneer in animation longer than many before him, or since." "Such work appearing on television pales the other television offerings to shame." "The sweat, smoke and stench from tobacco, perspiration and the projector itself bespeaks much of the hardiness of the then audience." Soon you find yourself reading the book with the "Oh-I-know-what-he's-*trying*-to-say" tolerance usually reserved for pre-schoolers. Sometimes you're *not* sure what he was trying to say, and soon you begin to suspect that even when you think you *are* sure, it's likely that he meant to say something else.

We can look forward to seeing perpetuated many times over the simple (and complicated) errors of fact that also appear on every page: *The Band Concert* referred to as *Mickey's Band Concert* and *The Tortoise and the Hare* as *The Hare and the Tortoise;* Fleischer spelled Fleicher; Helen Kane reputed to have supplied the voice for Betty Boop, when in reality Kane *sued* the Fleischers for aping her style; Bugs Hardaway credited with designing Bugs Bunny as an assistant to Chuck Thorsen, when it was Thorsen who drew the original models while working under Hardaway.

"I am not a professional writer," Heraldson has said elsewhere in print. "This should be quite obvious." Heraldson is an animator who works in Los Angeles and Scottsdale, Arizona, and though he must ultimately take responsibility, many of the problems may not be entirely his fault: he blames the countless errors in syntax, spelling, and punctuation on the publishers, and certainly no competent copy editor could have let this mishmash pass his desk; he blames them for the subtitle "A History of Animation," claiming that all he had in mind was a technical manual on the making of cartoons, and that the writing of the historical section was forced on him; he also blames them for what is possibly the book's most grievous error as a history, the failure to acknowledge its sources — according to Heraldson, his Dedication, Bibliography, List of Thanks, and Acknowledgments were all axed.

Whoever is at fault, it is not only the reader who suffers from *Creators of Life;* our knowledge of animation has been set back at least thirty years.

The Great Movie Cartoon Parade is another entry into the "Wonderful World of Make-Believe" that constitutes animation history. The publishers were apparently determined to fill one volume with pictures of every major cartoon character in the field, and if they couldn't find good ones they threw in lousy ones, or simply blew up to eye-boggling size an appropriate sketch from Mike Barrier's *Funny World*, Greg Ford's *Film Comment* issue on animation, or my chart "Cartoon Constellations" from *AFI Report* — resulting only in an exercise in packaging about as enriching as

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strip-mining, a coffee-table book with all the superficiality we have come to expect from that genre and none of the production gloss. Thus many of the characters are seen only in their original newspaper strips, though their animated physiognomy was often radically different. Chuck Jones' Tom & Jerry drawings are interspersed randomly with Hanna & Barbera's for four pages, whereupon the authors fill a whole page with Jones drawings and ask us to compare their style with that of the others!

The *choice* of characters is equally aimless (the authors admit themselves the Terry Bears are "uninspired and uninspiring"). The choice in most cases seems determined only by the availability of illustrations.

What text there is for *Great Movie Cartoon Parade* constitutes a minor aspect of the book, though it is consistent with the tone of the rest in its hasty preparation, illogical choices, and fondness for inaccuracies. (Many of the mistakes, like the drawings, are stolen from previous sources.) John Halas states that "...even before the introduction of sound, studios like MGM, Warner Brothers, and Screen Gems were making cartoons," and the sophisticated reader finds himself saying, "Oh, *really?*" Neither MGM, Warner Brothers, *nor* Screen Gems were making cartoons before the introduction of sound. Or isn't that what he means by 'studios like' them? But even the biggest silent animation studios, Fleischers' and Terry's, were nothing *like* the operations that Warners and MGM grew to be. Or does he just mean that *studios* themselves, of which Warners and MGM are but examples, were making cartoons before sound? Certainly none of the major movie studios of the time — Universal, Paramount, Fox — were involved in the making of cartoons, as MGM and Warners were later. Or isn't that what he means *either?* Time and time again there are thoughtless statements prompting this sort of speculation, all of it to no end and no avail.

Leslie Cabarga's *The Fleischer Story* passes most of this nonsense by. Cabarga is a San Francisco bohemian with a calling card that reads, "Art & Design (will cartoon) *Fleischerology* Piano Stylings Nightly (will croon) * Childcare a Specialty". No more a professional writer than Heraldson, then, Cabarga at the very least knows how to phrase a sentence, and his story of the Fleischers wasn't written under protest: he is rabid about his subject and intent on getting the facts straight. As his card relates, his talent is in the graphic arts, and he's designed and laid out his own book, giving it not only the accuracy and professional quality absent from the other two, but a personal touch lacking from any film book you are likely to find.

The problems with *The Fleischer Story* are more subtle. The book has no consistent point of view or visible organizing rationale: anecdotes, plot summaries, and dry facts are shuffled indiscriminately. The author's concern over the slightest discrepancy in the draftsmanship applied to Betty Boop ("...lost all but ten of the curls on her head... Betty's costume was also changed... the arms and shoulders are too broad... the once voluptuous plumpness of her limbs made her look aging and a bit heavy...") never advances beyond the obsessional. Cabarga contends that the difference between Fleischers' cartoons and the later (inferior) Famous Studios productions is so apparent as to be visible to the naked eye, but it's hard to make us believe that in the same book in which he confuses a mid-30s Fleischer Popeye *What—No Spinach?* with a late 40s Famous Studios Popeye called *How Green Was My Spinach.* ("If a Popeye cartoon doesn't have these doors, don't watch it," Cabarga warns, but there are two full seasons of good Fleischer Popeyes made without the embellishment of those sliding-door titles.)

Add to these problems an atrocious filmography ("Aug. 12" is the date given for the first Betty Boop cartoon, but the 20th Century has been rife with Aug. 12s, and we are given no clue which year this one came in), a Flip Book sequence printed *backwards* and physically incapable of being flipped, and the now-customary absence of bibliography, footnotes, or source acknowledgment of any kind, and you have a very nice film fan's album done up in a not quite pretty enough package to qualify as a real book.

But it is as a "Fleischerologist," not a film historian, that Cabarga hopes to succeed, and here he simply has no peer. The Fleischers have spent years on the dark side of the moon; now their story has been told, and for the most part reliably. If the book fails to emerge from all acid tests as a Philosopher's Stone of film history, it seems a small complaint when the field is choked with tomes that don't even tempt you to drag out the acid.

Joe Adamson

Norman McLaren, by Maynard Collins. Canadian Film Institute. 1976. 119pp. $4.95.

This is the first book about Norman McLaren in English, which is surprising. He has been making films for 43 years, a time span that in the cinema one usually associates with narrative heavies like Alfred Hitchcock and John Ford.

Norman McLaren was published in conjunction with the International Animation Film Festival held in Ottawa last August. It contains a brief biography, a short essay entitled "The Universe of Norman McLaren," an annotated filmography, an interview, a twenty-page list of awards McLaren and his films have won (including the coveted Silver Squirrel given by the Film Centrum Foundation Film Show in Naarden, Holland), an extensive bibliography, and a list of his films currently available from the NFB.

The book is by no means a definitive study of McLaren and his work. It is hardly more than an outline of his career, a basic introduction to his techniques and aesthetics. The essay and the filmography notes tend to overlap and make each other redundant; they also over-anticipate many points raised in the interview. However, the interview is still a good one. McLaren discusses how some of his more important films were made. In the only real glimpse the book gives us of how he regards himself as an artist in relation to the everyday world, he explains why, of all his approximately 64 films, only *Hell Unlimited* (1936) and *Neighbours* (1952) express explicit personal statements.

Maybe just the barest outline of McLaren's career is the only kind of book about him that we really need; certainly, in the future, more comprehensive books will probably tell us more about the man and his techniques, and perhaps extract a unifying *Meaning* from the entire oeuvre, but it's unlikely that they will ever begin to approximate a direct experience of even one of his films.

Phil Surguy

The "It" Girl: The Incredible Story of Clara Bow, by Joe Morello and Edward Z. Epstein. Delacorte Press. 1976. 284pp. Clothbound $8.95. (In Canada: Beaverbooks, $10.50).

In 1961 Clara Bow attended the funeral of her estranged husband, Rex Bell, with her incandescent smile intact. There had never really been much in her fifty-seven years to really smile about. Now there was less; the man who said he had "saved her mind" was gone. Four years later, she would be dead. Her heart would stop during "The Late Show."

Her biography, *The "It" Girl, The Incredible Story of Clara Bow,* is the stuff B movies are made of. All the familiar clichés are there: the unhappy childhood, the abject poverty, the innocent promiscuity, the Cinderella screen test, and most importantly, the tears behind the dazzling smile. Of course, Morello and Epstein cannot help it if Bow's life echoes that of the Land-of-Broken-Dreams character, which the major studios promoted in the twenties and thirties. But they could refrain from dramatizing encounters such as this:

> "Hi. I'm Clara Bow."
>
> "I know," he said, shuffling his feet, gazing at her huge brown eyes. "My name is Gary Cooper." His piercing eyes glowed unmistakenly with the light she knew so well in other men.

Edified by *Hollywood Babylon* and weaned from *Modern Screen,* Morello and Epstein delight in discussing their subject's love life. They must have smiled when they wrote about her affair with Harry Richman, "Broadway's greatest cocksman," and his bearskin rug.

What saves their work from becoming tripe is their well-written narrative of Clara Bow's unhappy childhood and reckless years as a starlet. A reader, learning of Bow's early years, may see the star's subsequent collapse and her nervous behaviour as not only understandable but inevitable. The "It" Girl becomes a human being in these chapters. Her affairs, harlequin romancy though they appear to be, contributed to her mental disquietude but also resulted from her traumatic beginnings.

"I don't trust life," she once said. "It did too many things to me when I was a child kid." Clara Bow was the only child of Robert and Sarah Gordon Bow to survive birth in their Brooklyn tenement flat. She was rewarded with the toleration that only a mentally-ill mother and an unusually passive father could give. When her mother lapsed into trancelike states and her father disappeared mysteriously for days, Baby Clara was locked in the bedroom. When her mother entertained gentlemen callers and her father again disappeared, Little Clara was locked in the closet. Her grandfather, only companion to Baby Clara, died when she was about five; the night after the

Joe Adamson was the author of "Alias Julius Henry Marx" in our Vol. 4 No. 12 and of "Of Mice and Cats" in the issue before that. His books include *Groucho, Harpo, Chico and Sometimes Zeppo* and *Tex Avery: King of Cartoons.* He also co-directed the award-winning film, *A Political Cartoon.* He lives in Malibu.

Phil Surguy, a screenwriter, lives in Toronto.

wake she slept in the coffin to keep him company. Her best friend, Johnny, favorite companion to Little Clara, was burned to death when she was nearly ten; after unsuccessfully smothering the flames, she cradled him in her arms until he died. The smile emerged, and the tears became hidden by rare beauty and intelligence that would enable her to escape.

Her father gave her two dollars to enter the Fame and Fortune Contest in *Motion Picture Classic*. She was only sixteen, but she won. Everyone on Seventy-Third Street was happy for her except her mother. Sarah Gordon Bow did not want her daughter to "enter a life of sin."

She entered Clara's bedroom one night and pressed a butcher knife to her throat. Clara awoke and talked her out of it. Two years later Mrs. Bow died at the state mental hospital, leaving her daughter with insomnia and an overpowering fear that she would die like her mother.

When she faced her first screen test in Hollywood, Clara Bow called upon the demons of toleration that had plagued her for nearly eighteen years, and she became the emotional machine that cranked out twelve pictures in one year. But buried within the talent lay the neurosis that would devour her. The emotional machine would continue to function until complications arising from Bow's promiscuity and the betrayal of her embezzling secretary Daisy DeVow would stop it. Following Bow's collapse in 1931, she married Rex Bell and turned her back on fame and fortune to raise her sons.

But after being saved from insanity by Rex Bell, after retiring from the screen, after mothering two boys, what is left for Clara Bow? Answer: about twenty pages. Morello and Epstein refuse to give Bow's later life the thoughtful treatment that marked their discussion of her early years. After her marriage to Rex Bell, the authors' portrait of Clara Bow nearly dissolves. They state that Bow was "remotely equipped for the reality of (motherhood)," yet they fail to describe her relationship with her sons George and Tony. They claim that "the similarities in the lives of Marilyn Monroe and Clara Bow are striking," yet they fail to support this assertion. They theorize on the star's tremendous emotional setback when she reached menopause without explaining what really happened to her. How could they possibly draw as convincing a picture of Clara Bow as they have without completing it before destroying it?

Unfortunately, Morello and Epstein promise a girl and nothing more. Clara Bow was also a woman, a lady, a matron, a legend. They see her only as a jazz baby who died in her sleep. They do not want to see more of the young woman reciting the cantos of Sir Walter Scott. In so doing, they have missed the most incredible part of Clara Bow's story. *The "It" Girl: The Incredible Story of Clara Bow* tells how she saw herself, how others saw her, but not how she really was.

Joel Thingvall

Joel Thingvall is presently a starving free-lance writer living in Minneapolis Minnesota, with plane tickets for the Big Apple.

Books in Brief

Joan Mellen's informative survey of Japanese cinema, *The Waves At Genji's Door*, draws on interviews with many of Nippon's directors for an insightful appraisal of the correlation between Japan's socio-cultural patterns and their movie representation. (Pantheon $15./ 7.95)

Comparable in authority to Rachael Low's classical *History of the British Film*, a substantial French study by Raymond Lefèvre and Roland Lecourbe, *30 ans de cinéma britannique* covers the British industry's progress between 1940 and 1975 in a detailed analysis of its production, economy and leading personalities. (Cinéma 76, Paris, FF 100.)

A revealing probe by knowledgeable Peter Cowie, *Finnish Cinema* examines the advances in production stimulated by that country's enthusiastic young moviemakers. (Barnes $6.95)

Interviews with 13 committed Mexican directors highlight Beatriz Reyes Nevares' *The Mexican Cinema*, a significant collection of expert views on the industry's problems, its cloudy future and its approach to the social scene. (U. of New Mexico $9.95/ 4.50)

An annotated bibliography of English-language sources compiled by Julianna Burton, *The New Latin American Cinema* offers well

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SURREALISM AND THE CINEMA
by Michael Gould

Many movie stills help the reader understand the effect of the surrealist movement in the twenties on such directors as Luis Bunuel, Josef von Sternberg, and Alfred Hitchcock. Written by Michael Gould, a graduate of the Film Department of York University in Toronto, SURREALISM AND THE CINEMA has "many insights to offer the serious student of film."—New Vistas. Published by A. S. Barnes & Company, Inc., Cranbury, New Jersey 08512.

researched data on the activities of the militant Latin-American film movement and the availability here of its movies. (Cineaste $1.)

In *Le cinéma américain d'aujourd'hui*, Théodore Louis and Jean Pigeon offer an expert French view of U.S. production. Thoroughly documenting the 1867-1976 period, it stresses Hollywood's concern for a cinema reflecting contemporary American society. (Seghers, Paris FF 36.)

A recent addition to a valuable French collection of essays, *Cinéma d'aujourd'hui*, edited by Pierre Lherminier, *L'Amérique des stars* examines closely the confusion between reality and fiction created by 50 years of Hollywood movie supremacy. (Filméditions, Paris, FF 15.)

The international use of films in communicating news of progress in social attitudes and technical skills is the subject of Jean Marie Ackerman's analytical guide, *Films in a Changing World*, a valuable compilation of annotated movie titles from some 50 countries. (Society for International Development, Washington, $4.)

From Scarecrow Press, two books deal with international aspects of film production. In *Superfilms*, Salvatore J. Parlato, Jr. has assembled a useful directory of over 1500 award-winning movies from many lands, and in *A Filmography of the Third World*, Helen W. Cyr offers a competently annotated list of 16mm movies, fictional and factual, depicting the history and culture of emerging countries. ($13.50 and $11. respectively)

A French study of the Bulgarian cinema by Albert Cervoni, *Les écrans de Sofia* unveils the progress of an industry that barely existed 30 years ago, but that has developed an aesthetic style, thematic versatility, and an energetic group of young directors. (Filméditions, Paris, FF 24.)

Fitting appropriately among national cinemas, the intergalactic variety is represented by Bjo Trimble's *Star Trek Concordance*, a comprehensive directory of casts, plots and glossary of the popular TV series, and by Tim Heald's *The Making of Space:1999*, an extensive study of the shooting of the British-produced video shows. (Ballantine $6.95 and $1.95 respectively.)

George L. George

Livres

Along with a profusion of literature of all types dealing with screen stars, French readers have indicated a continuous interest in books on film directors.

Claude Chabrol combines, in his autobiographical *Et pourtant je tourne...*, theoretical as well as practical considerations on the directorial craft, disclosures of his private life, political views, philosophical opinions, moral judgements and whatever relevant thoughts occur to him. A book rich in substance that reveals a fascinating personality. (Laffond FF 39.00)

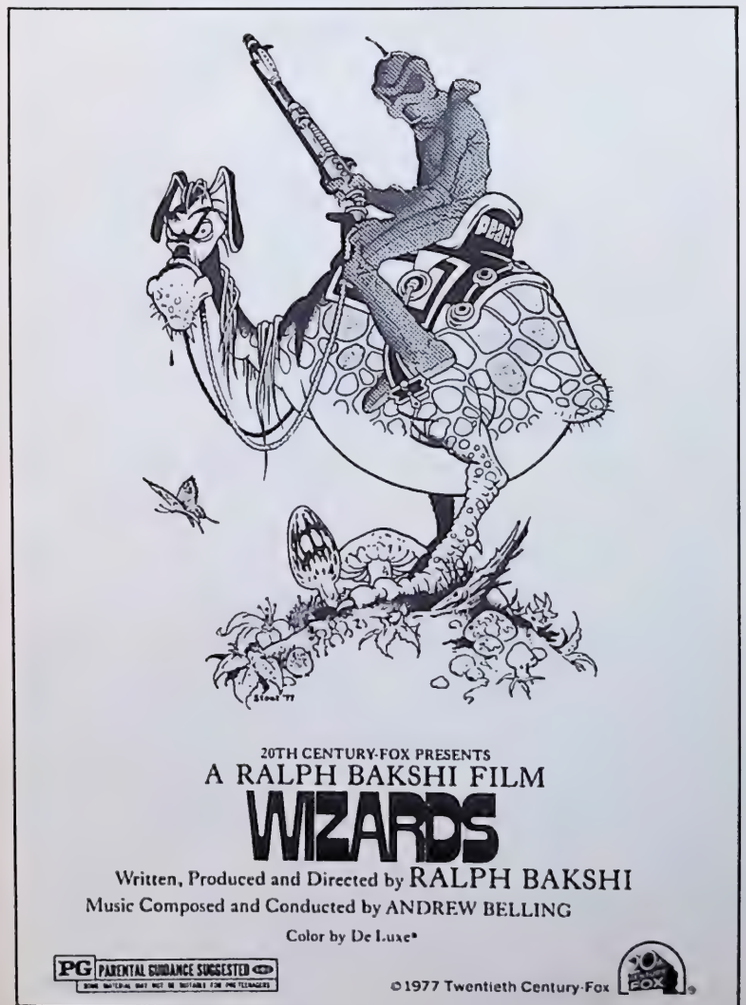
François Truffaut collects in *Les films de ma vie*, articles and movie reviews he wrote for various periodicals, and prefaces it with a lengthy essay on his cinematic preferences. His style is concise, straightforward and entertaining, as he lines up in reasoned perspective notable films and directors of his times. (Flammarion FF 48.00)

Roger Vadim obviously had fun writing *Mémoires du Diable*, an unabashed autobiography that is a happy mixture of anecdotes about his chaotic youth, the ladies who found him attractive, his actress-wives (Bardot, Deneuve, Stroyberg and our own Jane Fonda), and his lighthearted views on filmmaking. (Stock FF 35.00)

In *Le dossier Rosi*, well-known French film critic Michel Ciment perceptively analyzes the work of Italian director Francesco Rosi, whose films show the interplay between cinema and politics viewed with a "critical realism" approach to filmmaking. (Stock FF 50.00)

Marcel Carné's autobiography, *La vie à belles dents*, plays up the "homme du cinéma" angle that has dominated his life. He reviews his lengthy career with the understandable egomania of an eminent craftsman sensing the end of his productive years, remembering fondly his successes and bitterly lashing out at his critics and competitors. All in all, an important book about a significant era. (Ollivier FF 45.00)

The first woman director ever, Alice Guy (1873-1968), in *Autobiographie d'une pionnière du cinéma*, writes with disconcerting modesty of events big and small in a busy life. Perfectly oblivious to her trail-blazing role, she mentions almost casually the 400 films she directed in Paris and New York, her


20TH CENTURY-FOX PRESENTS
A RALPH BAKSHI FILM
WIZARDS
Written, Produced and Directed by RALPH BAKSHI
Music Composed and Conducted by ANDREW BELLING
Color by De Luxe®
PG PARENTAL GUIDANCE SUGGESTED
© 1977 Twentieth Century-Fox

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"chronophone" sound-on-disc movies, and her pictorial innovative effects. (Denoël FF 36.00)

Women filmmakers are very active all over Europe. Some 20 of them have contributed to *Paroles... elles tournent* incisive essays with a marked feminine slant about their work in films. Jeanne Moreau, Liliane de Kermadec, Chantal Ackerman, Michka Gorki, Nurith Frank Aviv are some of their names, and judging by their dedicated militancy, they may well all fight their way to the top. (Des Femmes FF 30.00)

In a slim volume, *Notes sur le cinématographe*, Robert Bresson has jotted down passing thoughts, precepts and aphorisms concerning the directorial function, the art of cinema and related subjects. Typical sample: "Il ne s'agit pas de diriger quelqu'un, mais de se diriger soi-même." (Gallimard FF 19.00)

In *Eisenstein*, scholar Dominique Fernandez offers a "psychobiographie" of the director, searching for the unconscious motivations of his creativity, as distinct from the image of Eisenstein as the chronicler of the Russian Revolution or the theoretician of film. An unusual book that focuses on his films through a psychoanalytical viewfinder. (Grasset FF 52.00)

George L. George

Books on Film: A Checklist

New books dealing in whole or in part with the motion picture and issued, for the most part, in the English language by North American publishers; also new editions of out-of-print titles, and novels the significance of which transcends their fictional format. Canadian agents and prices (where differing from U.S. publisher and price) are noted in brackets.

All About Cinema. By Derek Bowskill. Transatlantic Arts 1976. 142 pp. $6.95 (H) ($10.00.). The world of the movies explained to young people.

The American Film Industry. Tino Balio, ed. University of Wisconsin Press 1976. 499 pp. $15. (H) $6.95 (P). Collected texts on the industry's development.

The Animation Stand. By Zoran Perisic. Hastings House 1976. 168 pp. $7.95 (P)

Fred Astaire. By Michael Freedland. Transatlantic Arts 1976. 277 pp. $8.50 (H) ($13.50).

Brigitte Bardot. By Françoise Sagan, photos by Ghislain Dussart. Delacorte 1976. Unpaged. $12.95 (H) (Beaverbooks, $15.25).

The Best of Buster. Richard J. Anobile, ed. Crown 1976. 256 pp. $12.95 (H), $5.95. (General, $14.95 (H), $6.95 (P)). Keaton's films in frame sequences.

Beverly Hills: Portrait of a Fabled City. By Fred E. Basten. Douglas-West Publications, 7046 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, Los Angeles, CA. 90028. 283 pp. $23.50 (H). The past and present of the city and of the stars.

The Big V. By Anthony Slide. Scarecrow Press 1976. 224 pp. $9. (H). A history of the Vitagraph Co.

Celluloid Rock. By Philip Jenkinson and Alan Warner. Warner 1976. 136 pp. $5.95 (P). Twenty years of rock movies.

The Cinema of Federico Fellini. By Stuart Rosenthal. Barnes 1976. 190 pp. $9.95 (H). (Smithers and Bonnellie, $12.95).

Claudette Colbert. By William K. Everson. Pyramid 1976. 159 pp. $1.75 (P). (Barrdawn).

The Cowboy: Six Shooters, Songs and Sex. Charles W. Harris and Buck Rainey, eds. U. of Oklahoma Press 1976. 167 pp. $3.95 (P). (Burns & MacEachern, $4.75 (P), $11.95 (H)). A study of the cowboy in films and other media.

The Culture Barons. By Faye Levine. Crowell 1976. 312 pp. $10.95 (H). (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, $12.95). Analysis of power and money in the arts, including films.

Directing the Film. By Eric Sherman. Little, Brown 1976. 352 pp. $15. (H). (McClelland & Stewart, $17.50). Film directors discuss their art.

Walt Disney. By Bob Thomas. Simon & Schuster 1976. 379 pp. $9.95 (H). (Musson, $11.50).

Federico Fellini. By Charles B. Ketcham. Paulist Press 1976. 94 pp. $3.95. (Griffin, $4.55). A Roman Catholic view of Fellini in "search of a new mythology."

Film Canadiana 1975-76. Piers Handling, ed. Canadian Film Institute 1976. 279 pp. $14.95 (P). Comprehensive yearbook of the Canadian film industry.

Film Censorship. By Guy Phelps. Gollancz (London) 1975. 319 pp. $16.50 (H). (Clarke, Irwin $18.75). A British look at film regulation.

The Films of Anthony Asquith. By R.J. Minney. Barnes 1976. 284 pp. $10. (H). ($12.95). Movies by the British director.

The Films of Norma Shearer. By Jack Jacobs and Myron Braum. Barnes 1976. 250 pp. $17.50 (H). (Smithers & Bonnellie, $22.75).

Forever Hold Your Banner High! By Jerry Bowles. Doubleday 1976. 151 pp. $6.95. (H). ($7.95). The story of the Mickey Mouse clubs.

Freaks. By Werner Adrian. Warner 1976. 111 pp. $3.95 (P). Monsters in movies.

Fun and Games with "Jesse James." By Don Walker. McDonald County News-Gazette (Pineville, MO 64856) 1976. 74 pp. $3. (P). How the Henry King-directed movie was shot in Missouri in 1938.

The Great Garbo. By Robert Payne. Praeger 1976. 297 pp. $12.95 (H). (Gage, $14.95).

Hollywood Costume. By Dale McConathy and Diana Vreeland. Abrams 1976. 318 pp. $35.00 (H). (Prentice-Hall, $42.00). A history of 60 years of dress designing.

Hollywood Costume Design. By David Chierichetti. Crown 1976. 144 pp. $5. (P). (General, $5.75). 145 photos of stars 1926-49.

Hollywood Players: The Forties. By James Robert Parish and Lennard deCarl. Arlington 1976. 544 pp. $25. (H). (Dent, $27.50).

How to Make Historic American Costumes. By Mary Evans. Gale 1976. 178 pp. $11. (H) Reprint of a 1942 reference book.

Intermission. By Anne Baxter. Putnam 1976. 384 pp. $10. (H) (Longman, $10.50). An autobiographical memoir of three crucial years in the actress's life.

Investigation Hollywood! By Fred Otash. Regnery 1976. 252 pp. $9.95 (H). (Beaverbooks, $11.75). From the files of a private detective.

The Lardners: My Family Remembered. By Ring Lardner, Jr. Harper & Rowe 1976. 371 pp. $12.95 (H). (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, $15.25). The screenwriter's reminiscences.

Liberace. By Liberace. Popular Library 1976. 316 pp. $1.95 (P). Barrdawn). An autobiography.

Limo. By Dan Jenkins and Edwin Shrake. Atheneum 1976. 308 pp. $8.95 (H). (McClelland & Stewart, $10.25). Satirical novel about showbusiness.

Living It Up, Or, They Still Love Me in Altoona. By George Burns. Putnum 1976. 251 pp. $8.95 (H). (Longman, $10.50). An autobiography of the comedian.

A Loving Gentleman. By Meta Carpenter Wilde and Orin Borsten. Simon & Schuster 1976. 334 pp. $9.95 (H). (Musson, $11.95). William Faulkner in Hollywood.

Lucy and Ricky and Fred and Ethel: The Story of "I Love Lucy." By Bart Andrews. Dutton 1976. 278 pp. $8.95 (H). (Clarke, Irwin, $10.25).

The Manipulators. By Robert Sobel. Doubleday 1976. 458 pp. $9.95 (H). ($11.50). Media are in power and film is right there, manipulating with the best of them.

Margaret Mitchell's "Gone with the Wind" Letters. Richard Harwell, ed. Macmillan 1976. 441 pp. $12.95 (H). (Collier-Macmillan).

The Mary Hartman Story. By Daniel Lockwood. Whirlwind Book Co. 1976. 142 pp. $1.75 (P). (Gage, $1.95). The story of the popular TV serial.

Norman McLaren. By Maynard Collins. Canadian Film Institute 1976. 110 pp. $4.95 (P). A study of the animator.

Robert Mitchum. By John Belton. Pyramid 1976. 159 pp. $1.75 (P). (Barrdawn).

My Life on Trial. By Melvin M. Belli. Morrow 1976. 351 pp. $10.95 (H). (Gage). The attorney's memoirs, with references to Hollywood personalities.

My Side. By Ruth Gordon. Harper & Row 1976. 502 pp. $12.95 (H). (Fitzhenry & Whiteside, $15.95). An autobiography of the actress / author.

North American Film and Video Directory. Olga S. Weber, ed. Bowker 1976. 284 pp. $25. (H). A listing of libraries in U.S.A. and Canada with media collections.

Passport to Hollywood. By Don Wittemore & Philip Alan Cecchittini. McGraw-Hill 1976. 558 pp. $13.50 (H), $9.95 (P). ($10.95 (P)). Anthology of essays about film immigrants.

A Portrait of "All the President's Men". By Stanley Tretick (photos) & Jack Hirshberg (text). Warner 1976. 167 pp. $6.95 (P).

Propaganda. By Anthony Rhodes. Chelsea Press 1976. 319 pp. $30. (H). (Gage, $34.50). The art of persuasion during World War II.

Remembered Laughter. By Cole Lesley. Knopf 1976. 501 pp. $12.95 (H). (Random House, $15.50). A biography of Noel Coward.

Screen World 1976. By John Willis. Crown 1976. 256 pp. $12.95 (H). (General, $14.95). Pictorial and statistical record of the 1975 movie season.

Silent Movie. By Mel Brooks et al. Ballantine 1976. 197 pp. (P). The screenplay of the film.

The Sponsored Film. By Walter J. Klein. Hastings House 1976. 197 pp. $12.50 (H). Saunders of Tor., $15.75).

Styles of Radical Will. By Susan Sontag. Farrar Straus Giroux 1976. 274 pp. $5.95 (H). (McGraw-Hill, $4.50 (P)). Essays on aesthetics.

Superfilms. By Salvatore J. Parlato, Jr. Scarecrow Press 1976. 354 pp. $13.50 (H). An international guide to award-winning educational films.

Swastika. By Baxter Phillips. Warner 1976. 111 pp. $3.95 (P). Films as a weapon of oppression.

Tara Revisited. By Malcolm Vance. Award 1976. 224 pp. $1.75 (P). (Harnal). What has happened to those who made "Gone with the Wind."

They Went Thataway. By James Horwitz. Dutton 1976. 281 pp. $8.95 (H). (Clarke, Irwin, $10.25). About the old-time Hollywood cowboys.

Three Classic Silent Screen Comedies Starring Harold Lloyd. By Donald W. McCaffrey. Farleigh Dickinson U. Press 1976. 264 pp. $15. (H). A study of "Grandma's Boy," "Safety Last" and "The Freshman."

The Tough Guys. By James Robert Parish. Arlington 1976. 635 pp. $19.95 (H). (J.M. Dent, $27.95). Cagney, Lancaster, Douglas, Mitchum et al.

The Two of Us. By Tony Martin & Cyd Charisse. Mason-Carter 1976. 286 pp. $12.50 (H). (Methuen, $13.95). Autobiography of the performing couple.

Valley of the Cliffhangers. By Jack Mathis. Mathis Advertising, Box 714, 3501 Woodhead Drive, Northbrook, IL 60062. 448 pp. $66. (H). A lavish, oversize history of the Republic serials.

Who Was That Masked Man? By David Rothel. Barnes 1976. 256 pp. $17.50 (H). (Smithers & Bonellie, $22.75). The story of the Lone Ranger.

The World Encyclopedia of Comics. Maurice Horn, ed. Chelsea House 1976. 785 pp. $30. (H). (Gage, $27.50). Comic strips as progenitors of animated cartoons.

George L. George

George L. George, an Academy Award winner, has combined for many years film directing and film book reviewing in France, Canada and the USA.

SIXTEEN MILLIMETRE NEWS

Ivy Films has added hundreds of new Super-8 magnetic feature films to its rental library. Included are: **The Quiet Man** (with John Wayne and Maureen O'Hara), and the full-length versions of **A Night In Casablanca** and **Love Happy**. A complete Super-8 rental catalogue is available from Ivy Film at Suite 414, 165 West 46th Street, New York, NY 10036 (212-765-3940).

Syndicate Films (Suite 117, 7411 Hines Place, Dallas, TX 75235) has an interesting variety of films available for sale in 16mm, including Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour in **My Favorite Brunette**, a range of Roy Rogers and Hopalong Cassidy features, and **The Ducktators** and **Tokio Jokio** — two WWII Warner Bros. cartoons that have been banned for years.

The Speakers Referral Service recently formed by the Directors Guild of America is coordinating campus visits and speaking engagements for more than 400 member-directors of the DGA, ranging from top names with Academy or Emmy awards to the newest directors of theatrical and non-theatrical film and television. Further information may be had by writing David Shepard, Special Projects Officer, Directors Guild of America, 7950 Sunset Blvd., Hollywood. CA 90046, or by telephoning 213-653-8052.

Insight Exchange is a non-profit media organization that distributes films and video-tapes that document people's movements for social and personal change. They not only distribute **Coup pour coup**, but such other films as Johanna Demetrakas's **Womanhouse**, Chick Strand's **Cosas de mi vida** and **Mujer de milfuegos**, Peter Robinson's **Asylum** and **Psychiatry and Violence**, and Thomas Reichmann's **How Could I Not Be Among You?** Worth getting their complete listing. Insight Exchange, P.O. Box 42584, San Francisco, CA 94101 (415-621-2713).

CONFERENCES & COMPETITIONS

The International Federation of Film Archives is organizing a symposium (to be held in Varna, Bulgaria) on **The Influence of Silent Soviet Cinema on World Cinema.** For more information on the five-day event, write to the FIAF Secretariat, Galerie Ravenstein 74, 1000 Brussels, Belgium.

Entry deadline for this year's **Yorkton Biennial International Film Festival** is September. Rules and regulations from The Festival, Box 477, Yorkton, Saskatchewan, Canada S3N 2W4.

February 28 is the entry deadline for the **5th American International Widescreen Competition**, open to films of all lengths and guages wider than 1.33:1 aspect ratio. Contact J. Manion, Widescreen Competition, 843 Rocklyn Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15205.

The 1977 **Science Fiction, Horror and Fantasy World Exposition** will be held at Tucson's Marriott Hotel, June 2 through 5. There'll be exciting events and speakers aplenty. For further information, contact P.O. Box 4412, Tucson, Arizona 85717 (602-297-5812).

The 1977 **Los Angeles International Film Exposition** (March 15-31) will include, for the first time, a special program of Super-8 films. More information from the Filmex office at P.O. Box 1739, Hollywood, California 90028 (213-846-5530).

April 11 is the deadline for entries (student-made, 16mm or Super-8) in the April 21 **Geneva College Film Competition** for "Films with a Christian View of Life." There's a $50 first prize ($3 entry fee) and the chance of distribution. Address C.B. Hale, GCFC, Beaver Falls, PA 15010.

This year's **Athens International Film and Video Festival** takes place April 15-30 and there are prizes worth $3000 for filmmakers, producers and distributors (35mm and 16mm optical). Write the Festival at Box 388, Athens, OH 45701 (614-594-6888).

Eastern Michigan University offers a summer course (June 25-July 15), **The British Film: Visual Art and Human Perspective**, open to a maximum of 20 students, at $470 (including tuition, room and breakfast at the University of London, but not including air fare or lunches and dinners). There'll be classes, guest speakers, and visits. Contact Professor Frank Ross, EMU, Ypsilanti, MI 48197 (313-487-1310).

March 1 is the deadline for entries in the **Santa Clara Film Festival**, with $2000 in cash prizes offered. Entry forms from SCFF, Donohoe Alumni House, U. of Santa Clara, Santa Clara, CA 95053.

Entries are now being invited (up to March 1) for the 10th annual **U.S. Industrial Film Festival**, an international event devoted to the recognition of 16mm industrial motion pictures (as well as filmstrips and video cassettes). Further information from USIFF, 1008 Bellwood Avenue, Bellwood, IL 60104 (312-544-3361).

The second **Toronto Super 8 Film Festival** will take place April 1-3,

Give up a can of tuna for a porpoise!

During the last 15 years over two million porpoises-friendly, air-breathing mammals of the sea, have been killed by the purse seine nets now used by the tuna industry to catch tuna.

The fishermen use the porpoises to locate yellowfin tuna–the kind called light meat in the cans--and then set their nets around both the tuna and the porpoise in order to catch the tuna.

In 1972, the Marine Mammal Protection Act was passed to stop the killing of porpoises and other marine mammals. But the act has never been adequately enforced, and during last year's fishing season an estimated 130 thousand porpoises were killed in the nets.

Make a resolution for a porpoise. Read the label. Boycott light meat tuna and save a life.

Write your Congressman, c/o House Office Building, Washington, D. C. 20515, and ask that he help too–by demanding that the Marine Mammal Protection Act be enforced. Thank you.

Project Jonah

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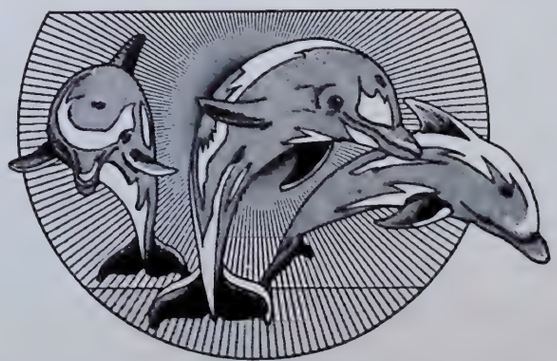

intended as an international celebration of S8, from home movies to professionally-made films. There'll be workshops and tours of labs, as well as screenings. Write Scott Didlake, Imagine 8, Box 7109, Postal Station A, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5W 1X8 (416-367-0590). All entries must be postmarked no later than March 13.

The second **Poetry Film Festival** will be held at the McKenna Theater on the campus of the San Francisco State University May 12 and 13. Filmmakers and poets are invited to send their work (before May 1) to Poetry Film Festival, No. 2 Casa Way, San Francisco, CA 94123 (415-921-4470).

March 5 is the entry deadline for the **Washington State Student Film Contest** (all 8mm gauges, students only). Contact Dr. William D. Schmidt, Bouillon Library, Central Washington State College, Ellensburg, WA 98926.

The second **Hiroshima International Amateur Film Festival** takes place this August, with entry deadline March 31. Write to: Hiroshima Film Festival c / o Chugoku Broadcasting Co., 21-3 Motomachi, Hiroshima, Japan.

Deadline is April 15 for the **Great Lakes Film Festival**, with substantial cash prizes for 16mm and Super-8 filmmakers who live, work or study in Wisconsin, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota or Indiana. Entry blanks can be had from the festival at P.O. Box 11583, Milwaukee, WI 53211 (414-963-9670).

"Movies on a Shoestring" will sponsor the 19th annual **Rochester International Amateur Film Festival**, May 7. Films (8mm, Super-8, or 16mm) must be received before March 26 (with a $3 entry fee). Contact the festival at P.O. Box 3360, Rochester, NY 14614.

The University of Evansville will hold its second annual **Summer Media Institute** June 13-July 1. Taught by nationally-known media educators and artists (like Yellow Ball Workshop's Yvonne Anderson), the three-week institute includes lectures, film screenings, and nine under-graduate and graduate courses in such areas as Super-8 film production, animation, criticism and authorship in the cinema. For more information and registration, get in touch with Dr. Thomas W. Bohn, University of Evansville, Evansville, IN 47702 (812-479-2377).

The second international **Fairytale Film Festival** takes place, July 31-August 7, in Odense, Denmark—Hans Christian Andersen's hometown. The competition is open to short cartoons and puppet films based on fairytales and folklore (a limited number of full-length films may also be accepted, out of competition). Write the Festival, Radhuset, Flakhaven, 5000 Odense, Denmark.

April 20 is the deadline for films to reach the 25th international **Competition for Mountain and Exploration Films** (c / o Ala Trasporti, Via A. da Recanate 4, 20126 Milan). 35mm and 16mm films can compete for prizes of up to 500,000 lire.

CLASSIFIEDS

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SUPER 8 SOUND & SILENT FILMS: Features, Shorts and many imports from Europe! Free List. Garland Audio-Visual Services, P.O. Box 28, Wingham, Ontario, Canada. N0G 2W0.

AMBITIOUS FILMMAKERS: Amazing new report describes how one-man operation has grossed $150,000 a year producing sponsored films. FREE LETTER with complete details. D.H. Vowell, P.O. Box 4891, North Hollywood, CA 91607.

BACK ISSUES TAKE ONE — Package deal, 4 sold-out issues free. Write for listing. G. Gervais, Box 96, Snowdon, Montreal, P.Q., Canada.

ORIGINAL MOVIE PROPS wanted — especially from Sabu films. Also any other films, but must be genuine. Paul Scharfman, 320 West End Ave., N.Y., N.Y. 10023.

START A 16MM COLLECTION. Free Catalog of features, shorts, serials. Rare and classic flicks. SFI, 7411 Hines Place, Apt. 117, Dallas, TX 75235.

FILMMAKERS: Independent studio offers beginners innovative apprentice school program. NEA granted. 6th year. Atelier, Box 70, Hoosick Falls, NY 12090.

OLD MOVIE MAGAZINES (1930s-1950s), comics curiosa, more. By mail auction. Mailbids, Dept. A9, 226 West 78th Street, NYC 10024.

THE ACCESSIBLE PORTAPACK MANUAL by Michael Goldberg is now available. $10 hardcover, $5 paperback from Video Inn, 261 Powell Street, Vancouver, BC, V6A 1G3.

Classifieds, Take One, Box 1778, Station B, Montréal, Québec, Canada H3B 3L3.

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Coming up in the May issue of Take One

Jean Muir, a starlet and active unionizer in the Hollywood of the 30s, found that her political interests and left-wing sympathies sabotaged her promising new career in television in the early 50s. Muir was the woman who brought to the public eye the nefarious blacklisting practices of the McCarthy era. Alanna Nash examines Jean Muir's life in Hollywood, her personal agony, and her eventual climb back to a new career, all in the context of the witch-hunting climate of the times.

plus much more

Making screen history.

For most of its first 40 years, the American film industry—reflecting the racial attitudes of the society at large—viewed black performers in stereotypical roles, such as domestic servants. In this carefully documented social history, Thomas Cripps shows how these stereotypes became so firmly entrenched and traces the long, difficult campaign to bring a more realistic image of black Americans to the screen. "Should be read by everyone, white or black, who takes motion pictures seriously—and should be studied by all Black Studies courses, and all film study courses." — Bill Walker, Formerly member of the Board of Directors, Screen Actors Guild.

SLOW FADE TO BLACK

The Negro in American Film, 1900-1942

Thomas Cripps

With 125 photographs.
$19.95

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PUNDITS' PAGE

A HANDY-DANDY GUIDE TO SOME OF THIS SEASON'S MAJOR FILMS, IN THE FORM OF CRITICAL NUGGETS GLEANED FROM THE WRITINGS OF AMERICA'S MOST INFLUENTIAL MOVIE CRITICS.

COMPILED BY SUSAN SCHENKER

CARRIE

Directed by Brian De Palma. With Sissy Spacek, Piper Laurie, William Katt and Amy Irving.

"*Carrie* is Pavlovian cinema at its most adroit." (Richard Corliss, *New Times.*)

"...there are so few incidents that two extended sequences are rendered in slow motion as if to pad out the running time..." (Andrew Sarris, *Village Voice.*)

"*Carrie* is a menstrual joke — a film noir in red." (Pauline Kael, *New Yorker.*)

"...it's a horror classic, and years from now it will still be written about and argued about, and it will still be scaring the daylights out of new generations of moviegoers." (Stephen Farber, *New West Magazine.*)

"The extent to which we have earlier become involved in the Cinderella fantasy and in the plight of the girl... is precisely the extent to which we are also likely to be offended by the film's indulgence in campy horrors." (Joy Gould Boyum, *Wall Street Journal.*)

Susan Schenker is a freelance story analyst for major motion picture companies and a freelance writer living in New York.

NETWORK

Directed by Sidney Lumet. Written by Paddy Chayefsky. With William Holden, Peter Finch and Faye Dunaway.

"And the main damage done by clothing this stainless-steel parody in nubby tweeds is that we increasingly resist the parody..." (Richard Eder, *New York Times.*)

"Somewhere between *Marty* and *The Tenth Man*, Chayefsky decided that the Bronx was a metaphor for the universe, and he has never fully recovered from this insight." (Andrew Sarris, *Village Voice.*)

"For most of its length, *Network* is drastically out of control —dramatically, cinematically and intellectually..." (Frank Rich, *New York Post.*)

"It might be a spoof on reality, but it's the most frightening experience I've had in a movie this year. It left me numb." (Rex Reed, *Daily News.*)

KING KONG

Directed by John Guillermin. Produced by Dino De Laurentiis. With Jeff Bridges, Charles Grodin and Jessica Lange.

"Brilliant remake. Boffo potential in all markets." (Murf., *Variety.*)

"I wanted a good time from this movie and that's what I got. It's a romantic adventure fantasy — colossal, silly, touching, a marvellous Classics-comics movie." (Pauline Kael, *New Yorker.*)

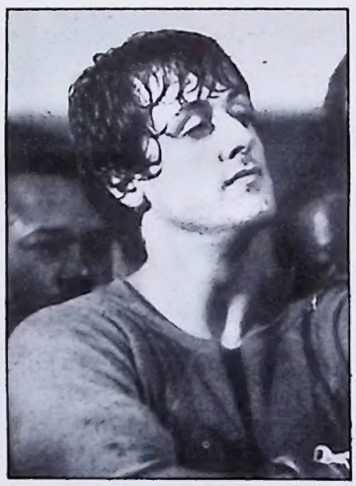
"*King Kong*, the new $24 million remake of the classic 1933 ape film, is a clumsy, pallid and often listless movie that fails on its own terms and almost any other terms that could reasonably be applied to it. ...To me, the most shocking aspect of this *Kong* is how tacky it looks." (Frank Rich, *New York Post.*)

THE LAST TYCOON

Directed by Elia Kazan. Written by Harold Pinter from the novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald. With Robert De Niro, Jack Nicholson and Ingrid Boulting.

"*The Last Tycoon* is by far the best film adaptation of a Fitzgerald novel ever made (and the most faithful), and it is the best recent movie about Hollywood as well. ...I can't recall another film, at least not any film of the last several years, so much committed to observing faces and always discovering more than meets the eye." (Roger Greenspun, *Penthouse.*)

"...probably the first mistake was to approach the book cap in hand, and the next was to hire Pinter." (Pauline Kael, *New Yorker.*)



ROCKY

Directed by John Avildsen. Written by Sylvester Stallone. With Sylvester Stallone, Talia Shire and Burgess Meredith.

"To repeat, best not dwell on the film. Better to let the smoggy fairy tale run its course and allow general audience patrons their own unique word of mouth propulsion." (Murf., *Variety.*)

"The film is very simple, so simple you may have to pinch yourself to believe you're liking it; and the simplicity is made possible by the clever expedient of including absolutely no bad characters." (Roger Greenspun, *Penthouse.*)

"Stallone's Rocky is a plodding thinker (it is no accident that he keeps two turtles as pets) who has the boxer's traditional compassion for people more fragile than himself." (Kathleen Carroll, *New York Daily News.*)

"The screenplay of *Rocky* is purest Hollywood make-believe of the 1930s, but there would be nothing wrong with that, had the film been executed with any verve." (Vincent Canby, *New York Times.*)

MIKEY AND NICKY

Directed by Elaine May. With John Cassavetes and Peter Falk.

"...it seems like a theatrical project that wandered into the wrong medium." (Murf., *Variety.*)

"The only way to describe *Mikey and Nicky* is as a celluloid death wish, a desperate challenge to the audience to care like anything about the film." (John Simon, *New York Magazine.*)

A STAR IS BORN

Directed by Frank Pierson. Screenplay by John Gregory Dunne, Joan Didion, Frank Pierson. With Barbra Streisand and Kris Kristofferson.

"Terrific. Outlook sensational." (Murf., *Variety.*)

"There's also something completely bogus in the pairing of Miss Streisand and Mr. Kristofferson, who, as lovers, are less exciting than King Kong and Jessica Lange." (Vincent Canby, *New York Times.*)

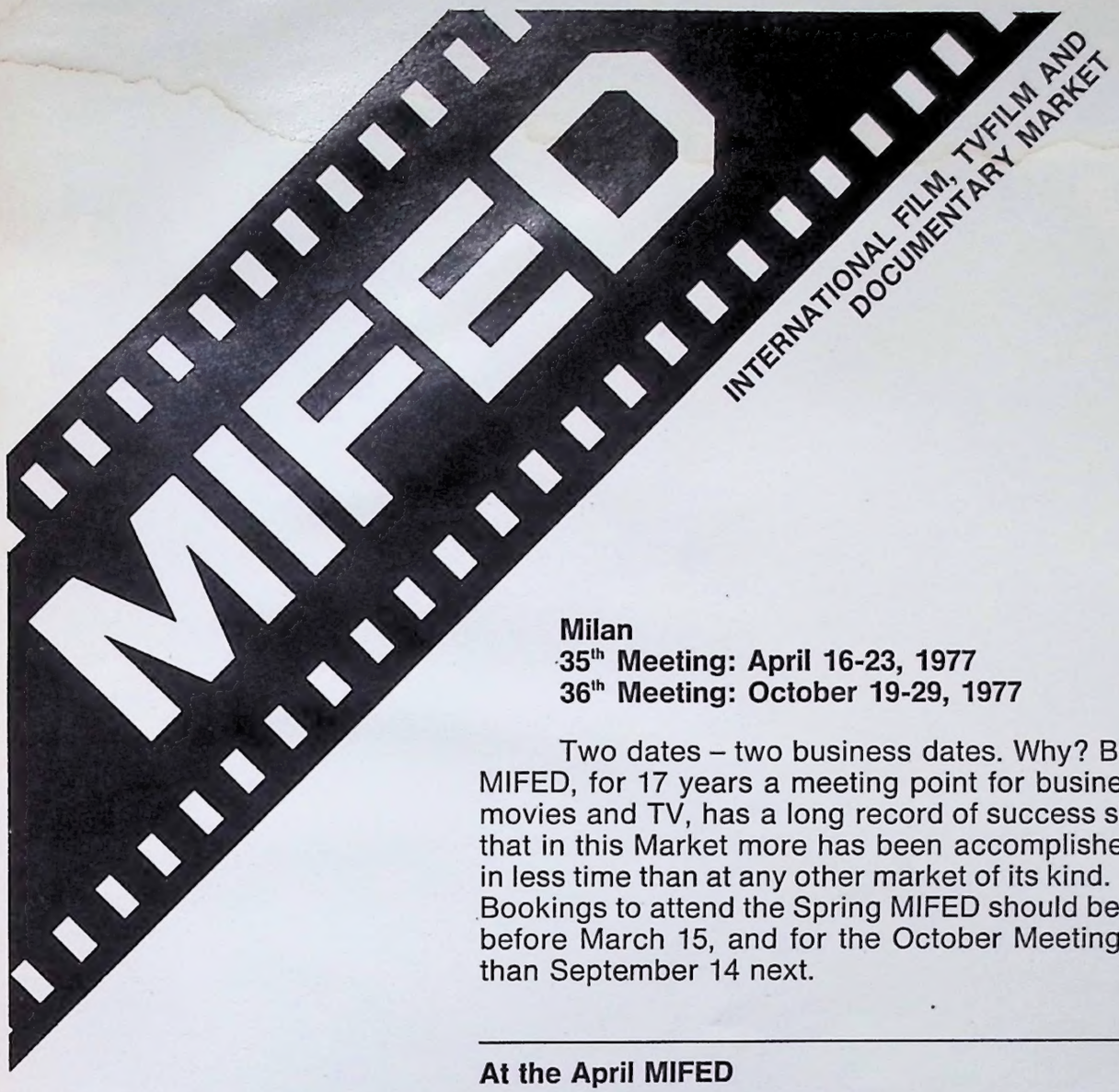
"O, for the gift of Rostand's Cyrano to evoke the vastness of that nose alone as it cleaves the giant screen from east to west, bisects it from north to south. It zigzags across our horizon like a bolt of fleshy lightning." (John Simon, *New York Magazine.*)

BOUND FOR GLORY

Directed by Hal Ashby. With David Carradine, Melinda Dillon.

"If there is any spiritual credit left to the bicentennial, then this is its form. ...the film's form is closer to a ballad than an epic." (Molly Haskell, *Village Voice.*)

"In fact, this long and uninflected movie could easily be dismissed as a much lesser *Grapes of Wrath* with music if it weren't for the bitter lyricism of Wexler's camera." (John Simon, *New York Magazine.*)



Milan
35th Meeting: April 16-23, 1977
36th Meeting: October 19-29, 1977

Two dates – two business dates. Why? Because MIFED, for 17 years a meeting point for businessmen in movies and TV, has a long record of success showing that in this Market more has been accomplished in less time than at any other market of its kind. Bookings to attend the Spring MIFED should be sent in before March 15, and for the October Meeting not later than September 14 next.

At the April MIFED

Viewing and selection of entries submitted for the Grand Prix MIFED Perla TV 1976 and announcement of winners
MIT Review: International TVfilm Exhibition
FIPRESCI Week organized by the « Fédération Internationale de la Presse Cinématographique »
A 1st World Review of Educational Documentaries

At the October MIFED

October 19-23: usual biannual MIFED Market
October 20-24: 4th MIFED East-West Film Market
October 25-29: 6th MIFED Indian Summer

The above Meeting will be preceded, October 15-19, by a screening session programmed by the « Union Européenne de Radiodiffusion » (U.E.R.).

Full information from MIFED, Largo Domodossola 1, 20145 Milano (Italy), ☎ 495.495, Cables MIFED-Milano, Telex 37360 Fieramil.
Or to: Gerald Rappoport, 159 West 53 Street, New York New York 10019, ☎ (212) 582-4318, Cable Ifexrep New York, Telex 420748 Rapp UI.

From: The National Film Board

To: Moviegoers across Canada...

Our newest collection of Theatrical Shorts

The Street
In soft, simple washes of watercolour and ink, film-maker Caroline Leaf captures the reactions of a St. Urbain Street family to a dying grandmother. From a book by renowned Montreal author Mordecai Richler.
Award: Grand Prize, International Animated Film Festival, Ottawa '76.

Maud Lewis: A World Without Shadows
The world that Maud Lewis created with her paint brushes is one of memorable whimsy — of orchards, oxen, fishermen and flowers. This gentle voyage leads into the tiny house that she decorated entirely with her work and into the peaceful world that she created.

Mindscape/Le paysagiste
Strewn with symbols, fuelled with trancelike images that unfold and shift ceaselessly across the screen, *Mindscape* pulls an artist into his painting and the viewers into the far reaches of his soul. Animated on a *pinscreen* by Jacques Drouin.
Award: Special Jury Prize, International Animated Film Festival, Ottawa '76.

An Old Box
A magical journey with a lonely old man who finds an old box, and within it the chance for a joyous fantasy in line animation. A film for all seasons by Paul Driessen.

The Art of Eating
A rare feast with one of the oldest, most exclusive and most knowledgeable dining clubs in Quebec — if not in the whole of North America. The preparation and presentation of all twelve courses, including the appropriate champagnes and vintage wines, must be seen to be believed.

The Mad Canadian
For the man who rockets a car up a ramp and flys it over a formidable barrier of parked cars, work is a risk that takes more than the desire to earn a living. This tense, tight close-up of stunt man Ken Carter on the stock-car racing track shows what that extra 'something' is.

COMING SOON TO THEATRES NEAR YOU.

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